THE SUPREME GOD REIGNS OVER ALL

COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL

THE SUPREME GOD REIGNS OVER ALL AND IS WORKING OUT HIS KINGDOM PROGRAM FOR ISRAEL DOWN THROUGH HISTORY

by Paul G. Apple, Revised January, 2026

For each section:

- Thesis statement … to focus on the big idea
- Analytical outline … to guide the understanding
- Devotional questions … to encourage life application
- Representative quotations … to stimulate deeper insight

Daniel 3:17 "*our God whom we serve is able to deliver us*"

Daniel 4:17 "*In order that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes*"

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BACKGROUND NOTES

Stephen Miller: The Book of Daniel is not only one of the most intriguing works in the Bible, but it is also filled with timeless truths that are just as relevant to modern believers as they were to those who first heard them. Yet too often this beautiful prophecy is neglected or deliberately avoided by believers because some of its passages seem strange and difficult. Upon careful examination, however, Bible students will find the principal message of Daniel clear and a study of the book extremely profitable. . .

When examining any issue, whether it is doctrinal or critical in nature, **Jesus' view** is of paramount importance. Strong evidence for the traditional view of **authorship** and **date** comes from the testimony of Jesus Christ himself. In **Matt 24:15** (par. **Mark 13:14**) Jesus stated: "*So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel.*" Four very important points concerning Christ's assessment of the authorship and date of Daniel's prophecy may be observed in this statement.

- First, Christ demonstrated his belief that Daniel was a real, historical person who was an instrument of divine revelation ("*spoken of through the prophet Daniel*").

- Second, Christ held that the prophecies contained in the Book of Daniel (from which he quoted) came from Daniel himself, not a later anonymous individual.

- Third, Christ assured that this prophecy describes future events, for the context shows that "*the abomination that causes desolation*" to which Christ referred was yet future. This means that arguments based on the premise that the prophets never foretold the distant future are invalid.

- Fourth, apparently the only view in vogue during the time of Christ for the setting of the prophet Daniel was the sixth century B.C.; therefore if Christ treated Daniel as a historical individual, he also assumed the sixth-century date. Porteous denies the traditional view but is, nevertheless, fully aware of the implications of this passage: "Both in Matthew and in Daniel, on the other hand, an individual living in Babylon during the exile is represented as prophesying events hundreds of years ahead."

Max Lucado: **Historical Situation**
The idolatry of the kingdom of Israel had led to its downfall in 722 BC when the Assyrians invaded and carried its people into captivity. The smaller nation of Judah lasted until 605 BC, when the Babylonians invaded and began carrying its inhabitants into exile. Daniel was taken in the first waves of exiles, and he witnessed the Babylonians deporting additional waves of Jewish captives in 597 BC and 586 BC. Daniel appears to have written his book to encourage his fellow countrymen to remain true to the one true God during their time of exile and to remind them the Lord still had a plan for them. Daniel accomplishes this by not only relating narratives of his own experiences and trials under their foreign rulers (see **Daniel 1–6**) but also by relating words of prophecy and interpretations of dreams that God had given to him (see **Daniel 7–12**).

Daniel Wallace: Two approaches to outlining Daniel: The traditional approach (see Bruce Hurt below) and the linguistic approach [based on which sections were written in which language].

1:1-2:3a	Introduction: This section functions, in part, as a sort of *de ja vu* reminder of Joseph, designed to establish Daniel as *trustworthy* before his people even though he is a high-ranking government official.		
2:4-7:28	Prophecies related to Gentiles (Aramaic)		
	2:4b-49	A	Prophecy of four world empires
	3:1-30	B	God's power to deliver his servants (from fiery furnace)
	4:1-37	C	God's judgment on a proud ruler (Nebuchadnezzar)
	5:1-31	C'	God's judgment on a proud ruler (Belshazzar)
	6:1-28	B'	God's power to deliver his servant (lion's den)
	7:1-28	A'	Prophecy of four world empires
8:1-12:13	Prophecies related to Jews/or, Israel in relation to the Gentile kingdoms (Hebrew)		
	8:1-27	A	(Antiochus) Antichrist and prophecies about Gentiles
	9:1-27	B	The end times and the Jews
	10:1-11:45	A	Antiochus-Antichrist and prophecies about Gentiles
	12:1-13	B	The end times and the Jews

Bruce Hurt: The Traditional Approach

TWO DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL		
	DANIEL 1-6	DANIEL 7-12
On Site	Historical	Prophetic
J Vernon McGee	The Historic Night with Prophetic Light	The Prophetic Light in the Historic Night
Precept Ministries	Living Out a — Biblical Worldview	Gaining Understanding — of the Time of the End
John Phillips	Daniel and His Personal Friends	Daniel and His People's Future
Irving Jensen	Mainly Historical: 6 Historical Narratives	Mainly Predictive: 4 Apocalyptic Visions
Irving Jensen	Daniel Interprets Other's Dreams	Angel Interprets Daniel's Dreams
Rob Salvato	The Prophet	The Prophecy

Tremper Longman III: Daniel is a book of **paradoxes**. The first six chapters are deceptively simple stories of faith under pressure. Daniel and his three friends have been forced to leave their homeland, Israel, and settle in the Babylonian king's palace. They are compelled to learn foreign ways in preparation to serve the government, which has made a hostile incursion against Israel and looms dangerously over that country of their birth. Each chapter brings new challenges, and each time they rise to meet the crisis. Neither Daniel nor his three friends waver in their faith or ponder their actions. They certainly seek divine help, but they are confident in their God, even if God might not preserve their lives through a trial (cf. **3:16–18**). God, however, is up to the task, demonstrating his sovereignty, his power over evil human intentions, again and again. Clear and encouraging, these six stories have spoken forcefully to many believers, including the youngest of children. Many of us who grew up in the church remember the stories of Daniel as a staple of children's Sunday school programs and vacation Bible school lessons.

Not so with the second half of the book, however! The simple division between **chapters 6** and **7** masks a radical shift in genre and complexity. While children resonate with the lessons of **Daniel 1–6**, seasoned Bible scholars scratch their heads over **Daniel 7–12** with the move from simple stories to obscure apocalyptic visions. The first half of the book are stories about Daniel; the second half are visions of Daniel. Even though there is a dramatic contrast in genre between the

two halves of the book, however, the overall message of the book is uniform: In spite of present appearances, **God is in control**. . .

As we study the book of Daniel, we expect to hear **God's story**. The book is filled with human characters and actions, but God is the subtle background character. We have also just argued that the Old Testament, including Daniel, is not just a **theocentric** book, but also a **Christocentric** book. Christ is anticipated in the Old Testament and proclaimed in the New. By emphasizing what might be called the theological message of the book, we avoid a common fallacy—a purely **moralistic approach** to the Old Testament. Most sermons and teaching on the book err by falling into the trap of simply turning Old Testament characters into heroes and villains: "Be like Daniel!" or "Don't be like Belshazzar!" Such teaching removes the focus of the biblical book from the intended main point, God, and thus misses the power of the passage.

David Malick: Argument of the Book of Daniel: Even though Israel is experiencing judgment at the hands of the Gentile nations, the Lord encourages her, through numerous circumstances and visions, that he is sovereignly in control of her present situation, he will deliver those who faithfully trust in him, and in the end of time he will ultimately deliver her from the Gentiles by judging the prince to come and resurrecting all saints.

Purposes of the Book:
A. To establish hope in future restoration by reflecting in vision God's dealing with Israel's national sin through the times of the Gentiles"
B. To instruct and admonish the people of God in the crisis of faith
C. To challenge the faithful to be awake and ready for the unexpected intervention of God in wrapping up all of human history

Homer Heater Jr.: Daniel went into exile as a young man in 605 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar forced Jehoiakim to submit to the new Babylonian kingdom. Daniel's ministry continued into the third year of Cyrus (**10:1**) (about 536 B.C.). Daniel therefore ministered for a period of about sixty-nine years. If he were about sixteen at the time of captivity, he would have been eighty-five when he made his last prophecy.

When one considers the religious climate during which Daniel grew up, his strong spiritual character stands out even more. The Josiah's, Daniel's and Ezekiel's may have been rare, but they did exist and bear testimony to the fact that God always had a faithful remnant that did "*not bow the knee to Baal*."

H.I. Hester: What kind of a world was this new home of theirs? Compared to the poor little country of Palestine it was a ig, rich, and prosperous country. Here the Jews found an advanced culture, big business and material splendor. Babylon, the chief city, was one of great wealth and magnificence. It was the center of a vast empire including all of Mesopotamia and the highlands beyond, as well as Syria and Palestine. The city of Babylon was on the monotonous planis of the banks of the Euphrates River. Ancient writers describe it as a city surrounded by four walls, each fifteen milesin length. Twenty four streets ran north and south and the same number east and west. In this way eash streeet terminated at a gate in the wall (100 of these) and the city was thus made up of more than six hundred square blocks. It is said that in the center of each square

was a garded. The city contained many elaborate and expensive buildings such as palaces and temples.

Bob Utley: **How are OT apocalypses related to OT prophecies?**

	Prophet		Apocalyptist
1.	spoken message	1.	written and highly structured message
2.	spoken to bring repentance and faith	2.	spoken to bring courage and steadfastness to the faithful
3.	history is the medium of God's activity (process)	3.	God intervenes and reforms history (crisis)
4.	message meant to change the present	4.	message meant to forecast the future
5.	"God said" revelation	5.	imaginative visions and dreams which must be interpreted by angels

Apocalyptic literature is a uniquely Jewish literary genre. It was often used in tension-filled times to express the conviction that God is in control of history and will bring deliverance to His people. This type of literature is characterized by:

1. a strong sense of the universal sovereignty of God (monotheism and determinism)
2. a struggle between good and evil, this evil age and the age of righteousness to come (a limited dualism)
3. use of standardized secret code words (usually from the OT prophetic texts or intertestamental Jewish apocalyptic literature)
4. use of colors, numbers, animals, sometimes animals/humans
5. use of angelic involvement by means of visions and dreams, which are usually interpreted by angels
6. primarily focuses on the soon-coming, climatic events of the end-time (new age)
7. use of a fixed set of symbols, not reality, to communicate the end-time message from God.

Bob Deffinbaugh: What makes the Book of Daniel most profitable for some makes it most problematic for others. Daniel is one of the great Old Testament prophets, and these prophecies have a great deal to say about things yet to come. For the Bible-believing Christian this puts Daniel on the “must read” list. For the unbelieving skeptic, it puts the message and meaning of this great book on the “hit list.” Much that is written about Daniel, then, is written from a critical perspective. Daniel is profitable for the Christian because it describes life in Babylon during the

dark days of the captivity of the Jews, in fulfillment of the prophecies God had given this wayward people. Finally, Daniel is a most profitable book because it describes the life of a very godly man, living in an ungodly world. Only about half of the Book of Daniel is prophetic; the rest is history. In the historical chapters of Daniel we find familiar stories, of Daniel in the lion's den, and Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace. These exciting stories provide models for all of us as to how we should live in an ungodly world, until that time when the Lord fulfills His prophetic promises and returns to the earth to establish His kingdom.

John MacArthur: Daniel was written to encourage the exiled Jews by revealing God's program for them, both during and after the time of Gentile power in the world. Prominent above every other theme in the book is **God's sovereign control** over the affairs of all rulers and nations, and their final replacement with the True King. The key verses are **2:20–22, 44** (cf. **2:28, 37; 4:34–35; 6:25–27**). God had not suffered defeat in allowing Israel's fall (**Dan. 1**), but was providentially working His sure purposes toward an eventual full display of His King, the exalted Christ. He sovereignly allowed Gentiles to dominate Israel, i.e., Babylon (605–539 B.C.), Medo-Persia (539–331 B.C.), Greece (331–146 B.C.), Rome (146 B.C.–A.D. 476), and all the way to the Second Advent of Christ. These stages in Gentile power are set forth in **chaps. 2** and **7**. This same theme also embraces Israel's experience both in defeat and finally in her kingdom blessing in **chaps. 8–12** (cf. **2:35, 45; 7:27**). A key aspect within the over-arching theme of God's kingly control is Messiah's coming to rule the world in glory over all men (**2:35, 45; 7:13, 14, 27**). He is like a stone in **chap. 2**, and like a son of man in **chap. 7**. In addition, He is the Anointed One (Messiah) in **chap. 9:26**. **Chapter 9** provides the chronological framework from Daniel's time to Christ's kingdom.

A second theme woven into the fabric of Daniel is the display of God's sovereign power through **miracles**. Daniel's era is one of 6 in the Bible with a major focus on miracles by which God accomplished His purposes. Other periods include:

1) the Creation and Flood (**Gen. 1–11**);
2) the patriarchs and Moses (**Gen. 12–Deut.**);
3) Elijah and Elisha (**1 Kin. 19–2 Kin. 13**);
4) Jesus and the apostles (**Gospels, Acts**); and
5) the time of the Second Advent (**Revelation**).

God, who has everlasting dominion and ability to work according to His will (**4:34, 35**), is capable of miracles, all of which would be lesser displays of power than was exhibited when He acted as Creator in **Gen. 1:1**. Daniel chronicles the God-enabled recounting and interpreting of dreams which God used to reveal His will (**chaps. 2, 4, 7**). Other miracles included:

1) His writing on the wall and Daniel's interpreting it (**chap. 5**);
2) His protection of the 3 men in a blazing furnace (**chap. 3**);
3) His provision of safety for Daniel in a lions' den (**chap. 6**); and
4) supernatural prophecies (**chaps. 2; 7; 8; 9:24–12:13**).

ESV.ORG ***Key Themes***

I. It is possible to live a faithful life while surrounded by pagan influences, if one serves the Lord wholeheartedly (**ch. 1**).

II. God can give his faithful servants abilities that cause even unbelievers to appreciate them (**chs. 2; 3; 6**). Nevertheless, believers should not assume that God will always rescue them from harm (**3:16–18**).

III. God humbles the proud and raises up the humble. Even the hearts of the greatest kings are under his control (**chs. 4; 5**).

IV. This world will be a place of persecution for God's people, getting worse and worse rather than better and better (**chs. 2; 7**). The Lord will judge the kingdoms of this world and bring them to an end, replacing them with his own kingdom that will never end. This kingdom will be ruled by "*one like a son of man*" who comes "*with the clouds*," a figure who combines human and divine traits (**7:13**).

V. God is sovereign over the course of history, even over those who rebel against him and seek to destroy his people (**ch. 8**).

VI. The Babylonian exile was not the end of Israel's history of rebellion and judgment. In the future, Israel would continue to sin against the Lord, and Jerusalem would be handed over to her enemies, who would damage her temple and do other offensive things (**chs. 8; 9; 12**). Eventually, though, the anointed ruler would come to deliver God's people from their sins (**9:24–27**).

VII. These earthly events are reflections of a great conflict between angelic forces of good and evil (**ch. 10**). Prayer is a significant weapon in that conflict (**9:23**).

VIII. God rules over all of these conflicts and events, he limits the damage they do, and he has a precise timetable for the end of his people's persecutions. At that time he will finally intervene to cleanse and deliver his people (**ch. 12**).

IX. In the meantime, believers must be patient and faithful in a hostile world, looking to the Lord alone for deliverance (**11:33–35**).

Gene Taylor: **The Lessons of Daniel**

A. God rules in the kingdoms of men.

1. Nebuchadnezzar did not "take" Jerusalem. God gave it to him. (**1:2**)
2. Amidst the thrones of the world, wherever they may be, there is one throne that reigns supreme over all upon whom sis the King of Kings and Ancient of Days. (**2:21:7:9-10**)
    a. It is by the will of God that kings are raised or deposed. (**2:21; 4:17, 25**)
    b. The destiny of the nations is within his hands. (**5:18ff**; cf. **Acts 17:26**)
    c. No battle or siege is successful unless God wills it. (**1:2a; 5:25-30**)
3. God shows that all heathen nations and individuals were still accountable to His moral law. (**4:27; 5:22-23, 27**)

B. God cares for His own.

1. The Jews of the captivity were tempted to think that God had forgotten them.
2. God's deliverance of the three men from the furnace and Daniel from the lions' den would serve as proof that God still loved and cared for His people – whom the Lord loves He chastens and disciplines. (**Hebrews 12:6**)

C. The superiority of the kingdom of God to tohe kingdoms of men.
    1. All the world kingdoms would be earthly land devilish while the kingdom of God would be heavenly.
    2. The kingdoms of men were destined for destruction while the kingdom of God under the rule of the Messiah was destined for glory. (**2:44-45; 7:1-28**)

D. Faithfulness under trying circumstances.
    1. In contrast to the worldly who tend to go with the crowd and follow the path of least resistance, Daniel and his three friends illustrate that we can live righteously in spite of our surroundings. (**1:8; 3:13-18; 6:10-17**)
    2. As God rewarded them for such faithfulness, he will also reward us.

E. Divine protection.
    1. God does not leave the faithful to the mercy of their enemies.
    2. When Daniel and his friends were faithful, God protected them. (**1:18-20; 2:12-13; 3:19-27; 6:10-23**)

https://www.padfield.com/acrobat/taylor/daniel.pdf

Chuck Swindoll: *Why is Daniel so important?*

Daniel is one of the few Bible books that takes place during a period of judgment (many books foretell it and a few look back on it) and in a foreign nation. Whether it's in the contrast between the culture's idol worship and Daniel's faithful purity or in the account of the arrogant Nebuchadnezzar and his humbling encounter with God, the pagan backdrop in Daniel makes the Lord's power shine through in a magnificent and majestic way that stands out in Scripture. The book of Daniel makes it clear that the true God is the supreme ruler over heaven and earth (**Daniel 4:17**), even when all seems lost and the consequences of sin seem overwhelming.

What's the big idea?

The book of Daniel stands as a unique mix in the Old Testament, for while it begins with history, it makes a strong transition at **chapter 7**, where it contains visions of future events significant to the Jews. In particular, **Daniel 9:24–27** gives a meticulous timeline of when Israel's Messiah would appear and the events that would follow.

In both the historical and the prophetic sections, Daniel presents a strong case for the absolute sovereignty of God, even over a multiplicity of self-absorbed foreign powers. This theme of sovereignty occurs on numerous occasions, including Daniel's deliverance from the lions' den, his friends' rescue from the fiery furnace, and the future arrival of the Ancient of Days to save His people from the forces of evil (**Daniel 3:23–30; 6:19–23; 7:9–22**).

Andrew Hill: The book of Daniel presents a "**theology of history**." Theology is understood as the portrayal of the person and work of God as revealed in the Bible. History is considered the chronological record of significant events affecting a nation or institution (and often including an explanation of their causes). In one sense, God is always both "cause" and "effect" in biblical

history since he "acts" in history so that Israel and the nations might know that he is the Lord (e.g., **Eze 5:5, 13**). The specific historical referent here is the nation of Israel as the people of God and the Hebrew institutions of Yahweh's temple and the Davidic monarchy.

Naturally this study of history spills over to include other nations since biblical Israel existed in a particular time and space continuum (cf. **Dt 7:6–8**). Beyond this, the destinies of Israel and all other people groups are entwined because God chose one nation to bless all nations (**Ge 12:1–3**). Daniel's "theology of history" is summarized in **Nebuchadnezzar's confession** that God lives forever, his dominion is eternal, he rules the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth, and nothing can prevent him from accomplishing his purposes in the world (**Da 4:3, 34–35**).

A theology of history was essential for the Israelites exiled in Babylonia because they suffered from "an intense condition of theological shock." The four pillars of divine promise that undergirded Israel's confidence in Yahweh have been identified as: the irrevocability of God's (Sinaitic) covenant with Israel, Yahweh's ownership of the land of Canaan, Yahweh's eternal covenant with David, and Yahweh's residence in Jerusalem. How were the captive Hebrews to understand the reality that Jerusalem had been sacked, Yahweh's temple razed, the Davidic dynasty terminated, and a substantial population of Israelites deported to Babylonia?

The several distinct components comprising Daniel's theology of history may be outlined as follows:

• God is sovereign over his creation as the God of gods and Lord of kings (**2:47**), and he determines the destiny of nations (**1:2**), dispenses knowledge and understanding (**1:17**), possesses all power and wisdom (**2:20**), appoints and deposes kings (**2:21**), reveals deep and hidden things—including the future (**2:22; 7:17–18; 8:19; 10:14**)—exercises eternal dominion (4**:3; 7:14**), controls the fate of individuals (**5:23**), performs signs and wonders and rescues and saves (**3:28–29; 6:27**), and keeps his covenant of love (**9:4**). Davies summarizes that as the God of history Yahweh knows all, controls all, and rescues.

• The people of God living under his sovereign rule must trust in his control, accept responsibility for their actions, and look to the future in hope. Prayer is the vehicle for this hopeful outlook and the catalyst for change. Daniel's example and message assure the Hebrews that despite the fact that the Jerusalem temple—Yahweh's house of prayer—is destroyed, he still hears and answers prayer. Prayer to Yahweh may or may not bring deliverance (as the testimony of Daniel's three friends acknowledges; **3:16–18**). That is not the point, however, but rather the posture of faithfulness toward God in the face of trial, whether that posture results in deliverance or martyrdom. It is through prayer that Israel maintains covenantal relationship with God (**1Ki 8:30**), and prayer is one means by which order is recovered out of chaos (**1Ki 8:34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 50**; cf. **Jas 5:16**).

• God's people living under his sovereign rule must discern that not all suffering is retributive based on the blessings and curses of covenantal relationship with Yahweh (cf. **Dt 28**). Daniel warns God's people of times of persecution and oppression ahead inflicted by the nations ruling over Israel (**Da 7:25; 8:24; 11:16, 24**). Unlike the divine judgment of the Babylonian exile, they need to know that this suffering is not necessarily punishment for sin but divine discipline for

purification (**11:35**). Daniel makes it clear that this "*time of distress*" is temporary (**11:32**) and that the true people of God will persevere and experience deliverance (**12:1**). Death itself proves to be no barrier to God's sovereignty or faithfulness, as the promise of resurrection will bring vindication to the righteous who die as a result of the persecution (**12:2–3**).

• God's people living under his sovereign rule must recognize that a series of empires must rise and fall and that an interim period of "waiting" must elapse before the kingdom of God breaks into history (**12:4, 9–13**). This means God's promises for Israel's restoration after the exile, as forecast by Jeremiah (e.g., **Jer 31:31–34**) and Ezekiel (e.g., **Eze 34:23–25; 37:24–25**), have not failed but will be delayed until God's purposes are accomplished through the historical process of the rise and fall of nations. This ability to make known to his people such things pertaining to the future is both a mark of God's omniscience and an act of his grace (cf. **Isa 41:21–22; 44:26–27**).

J. Sidlow Baxter: There is a special reason why the supernatural is so prominent in Daniel. Israel was now in captivity. Jerusalem was ruined. Even the temple – that last hope – was gone. Jehovah, after all, had proved unequal to the gods of the Babylonians! Bel-Merodach had conquered Jehovah! That is what the Babylonians exultantly supposed. That is what the Jews were tempted to believe. There seemed no possibility now of national restoration. What though Jeremiah had given it as Jehovah's word that there should be a return after seventy years? Had not Jehovah's promises to David and Solomon now proved false?

Now the miracles in this Book of Daniel were a sign from God, both to Israel and the Gentiles. When the earthly sovereignty was transferred from Israel to Nebuchadnezzar, God raised up this notable man, Daniel, to represent Him at the Babylonian courts, so that through his lips, and by these supernatural attestations, He might teach Nebuchadnezzar, and impress upon the Gentile world-empires, through Nebuchadnezzar their head, the delegated nature of their authority, and their accountability to the one true God, even the God of Israel. Thus, when the testimony to Jehovah ceased at Jerusalem, God raised up this supernatural witness to Himself at the heart of the Gentile world empire. The chosen people were to know that Jehovah's eye was watching, and His hand still guiding the course of things on earth, that He was as near to His people in exile as He had been to them in their own land, and just as able to deliver them from Babylon as when, of old, He had brought their fathers out of Egypt. The prominence of the supernatural, then, in Daniel, is at once understandable. In fact it is such as might be expected at such a critical juncture.

Greg Thurston: **Sweet and Sober Truths for Bitter Providences, Dan. 2-12.**

A. Our God is Great and so Rules Kings and Nations, **Dan. 2**.
B. Our God is Holy and therefore has a Plan that is Beyond our Ability to Understand, **Dan. 3.**
C. Our God Reigns and so Holds the Heart of the King in His Hands, **Dan. 4.**
D. Our God is Jealous and so will not allow Himself and so the Believer- to be Mocked, **Dan. 5.**
E. God's Way is Infallible and so makes no Mistakes when it Comes to the Child of God, **Dan. 6.**
F. In the End, God's People Win, **Dan. 7.**
G. Until the End, God's Kingdom will Suffer Violence, **Dan. 8.**
H. God is Faithful to His Promises and so His People, **Dan. 9:1-19.**

I. God's Purpose and Plan for all things are Realized in Christ, **Dan. 9:20-27!**
J. There is much More to this Life than Meets the Eye, **Dan. 10.**
K. Life is a Veil of Tears which God's People will Overcome through Christ, **Dan. 11-12.**

OVERVIEW OF BOOK OF DANIEL

INTRODUCTION

It has certainly been a momentous week in world history with the striking of peace agreements in the Middle East. When have you ever seen such unity expressed between the Arab nations and nation of Israel? But make no mistake. We continue to live in what the Bible refers to as the "*times of the Gentiles*" where Gentile nations dominate the world scene. Israel is still a minor player and does not wield the significance that she shall have in the end times. So as we look into the book of Daniel – the last of the OT major prophets whose life and ministry spanned the entire 70 period of the Babylonian Captivity (605 – 536 BC) and then some, I want to start with some background about the "*times of the Gentiles*." God uses Daniel to reveal very detailed prophecies about what will take place in these Gentile kingdoms before God establishes His Messianic Kingdom of 1,000 years on earth (called the **millennial kingdom**) which will then transition into the **eternal kingdom**. Gentile nations and kingdoms will rise and fall according to God's sovereign control but they cannot claim any lasting supremacy. Daniel in the OT corresponds to Revelation in the NT in terms of end times prophecy and apocalyptic focus.

> **Dan. 2:44** "*And in the days of those kings* [pictured as gold, silver, bronze and iron – the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman empires] *the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever*."

That is why God humbled King Nebuchadnezzar to get him to confess in **Chap. 4:17 --**

> "*In order that the living may know That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, And bestows it on whom He wishes, And sets over it the lowliest of men*."

The other kings featured in the book of Daniel (Belshazzar of Babylon and Darius the Mede) end up giving similar testimonies. This reminds us of God's purpose expressed in **Phil. 2:10-11**

> "*so that, at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every togue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*."

I found it interesting this week that President Trump was quoted as once again reflecting on his prospects of getting into heaven. He expressed reservations about being qualified – obviously expressing a works-based approach – not sure that he was good enough despite his great political accomplishments and how much in his words he has "helped so many people." That is why there is such a disconnect between the faith of Erika Kirk who can forgive and pray for her enemies vs. the President who admits he is unable to do so. What a window of opportunity we have today to explain what **grace** in the gospel really means. I was listening to a conservative commentary Matt Walsh addressing Trump's comments and Walsh clearly did not understand the biblical doctrine of grace. He was actually complimenting Trump for *working out his salvation with fear and trembling*. In other words he thought it was a statement of **humility** on the part of Trump not to think that he was going to heaven. People need to sit under Dr. Harmon's Sunday morning teaching from the book of **I John** on how we can **know for sure** that we are saved and

have real **Assurance of salvation**. So use this window to discuss these topics with your friends and neighbors.

But now where do we get this phrase "*the times of the Gentiles*"? The only biblical reference is in **Luke 21:24** so let's turn there.

> **21:6-7** "*the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down. [7] And they questioned Him, saying, 'Teacher, when therefore will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place*?'"

Jesus provides an answer which relates to the near-term destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70 … but then much of what he says jumps forward to the eschatological fulfillment in the last days when Christ shall return.

> **21:24-28** "*Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. [25] "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, [26] men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. [27] "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. [28] "But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near*."

The first thing that we must note is that the **concept of Gentile nations** only exists by way of contrast to the ethnic nation of Israel, the Jewish people – God's chosen covenant nation. This is not a spiritual contrast between unsaved Gentiles and the spiritual Israel of God = true believers. This is an ethnic, national contrast.

<u>When did this time period begin?</u>
Starting Point: Babylon's Destruction of Jerusalem (586 BC)

- In **586 BC**, **King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon** conquered Jerusalem, destroyed the **First Temple**, and exiled the Jewish people.
- This marked the **end of the Davidic monarchy** and the beginning of **Gentile political domination** over Jerusalem and the Jewish people.

This aligns with **Daniel's prophecy** in **Daniel 2 and 7**, where a series of **Gentile kingdoms** (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome) rise and rule during the period when Israel has **no sovereign rule over the land**.

This period continues <u>until Christ returns</u> so we are presently living in a continuation of the times of the Gentiles. Note how the Apostle Paul confirms this in **Romans 11** as he again draws a contrast between Jews and Gentiles:

> (**11:25-27**) "*For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; [26] and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob." [27] "And this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins*."

We have not yet experienced this fullness of the Gentiles and the subsequent salvation of all Jews who are alive at that point in time in the last days.

Chuck Swindoll: Daniel is one of the few Bible books that takes place **during** a period of judgment (many books foretell it and a few look back on it) and in a foreign nation. Whether it's in the contrast between the culture's idol worship and Daniel's faithful purity or in the account of the arrogant Nebuchadnezzar and his humbling encounter with God, the **pagan backdrop** in Daniel makes the Lord's power shine through in a magnificent and majestic way that stands out in Scripture. The book of Daniel makes it clear that the true God is the supreme ruler over heaven and earth (**Daniel 4:17**), even when all seems lost and the consequences of sin seem overwhelming.

So what we see in the book of Daniel is the vast contrast between the kingdoms of human power and the kingdom of God's power. What we see in the person of Daniel is the ability to please God as citizens of both kingdoms. How are we to survive and please God in the midst of our pagan culture? Daniel provides the model for us.

John Walvoord: In the dark hour of Israel's captivity, with the tragic destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, there was need for a new testimony to the mighty and providential power of God. Such is afforded by the book of Daniel… The book of Daniel, like Esther, reveals God continuing to work in His people Israel even in the time of their chastening. In this framework the tremendous revelation concerning the times of the Gentiles and the program of God for Israel was unfolded.

BIG IDEA:
The Supreme God Reigns Over All and Is Working Out His Kingdom Program for Israel Down Through History

David Malick: **Argument of the Book of Daniel**: Even though Israel is experiencing judgment at the hands of the Gentile nations, the Lord encourages her, through numerous circumstances and visions, that he is sovereignly in control of her present situation, he will deliver those who faithfully trust in him, and in the end of time he will ultimately deliver her from the Gentiles by judging the prince to come and resurrecting all saints.

OVERVIEW:
Even the most powerful and wicked of earthly kingdoms remain under the sovereign control of the supreme God who is faithfully working out His kingdom agenda to eventually save and bless His elect nation Israel. For Daniel and those returning from the Babylonian Captivity to attempt to rebuild Jerusalem, the times could have been very disheartening. As the seventy year period of prophecied judgment reaches its conclusion, where are the fulfillment of all of God's covenant promises regarding a kingdom of righteousness and peace? Daniel was blessed with insight into coming historical events. In fact the level of detail regarding the prophecies down through Alexander the Great and then Antiochus IV Epiphanes is so specific that liberal critics can only conclude that the book of Daniel was written after the fact. But the God who controls all of history, the God who graciously provides insight into the future is also the God of miracles who

sustains and delivers His faithful servants who live in the midst of pagan secular society. Here we have some of the most famous stories of the bible – the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lion's den, the handwriting on the wall, etc. But there yet remains the most troubling time of suffering for the nation Israel – under the wicked attacks of the Antichrist and satanic forces. God promises that this last day event will be limited and will ultimately purge and refine the nation in preparation for their ultimate salvation and future reward. So the exhortation is not to be anxious but to stay the course and pursue faithful living amidst a pagan culture in anticipation of a glorious future.

AUTHORSHIP:

The book clearly identifies Daniel [whose name means "*God is my Judge*"] who lived in the sixth century BC as the author. [**8:15, 27; 9:2; 10:2, 7; 12:4, 5**] [This was widely accepted until higher critics began leveling some serious attacks. Their charges were primarily motivated by theological bias: How could the author predict so many specific prophecies about coming events in world history? [**Chap. 11** itself contains over 100 specific prophecies.] Just on that basis alone they claimed that the book had to have been written by an unknown individual after the events had already occurred. Of course that would make the book a complete fraud. They piled on with some other minor claims of linguistic problems (Greek or Aramaic terms that were supposedly of later origin) or even minor historical errors. But nothing that we need to spend time addressing.

Stephen Miller: When examining any issue, whether it is doctrinal or critical in nature, **Jesus' view** is of paramount importance. Strong evidence for the traditional view of **authorship** and **date** comes from the testimony of Jesus Christ himself. In **Matt 24:15** (par. **Mark 13:14**) Jesus stated:

> "*So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel.*"

Four very important points concerning Christ's assessment of the authorship and date of Daniel's prophecy may be observed in this statement.

- First, Christ demonstrated his belief that Daniel was a **real, historical person** who was an instrument of divine revelation ("*spoken of through the prophet Daniel*").
- Second, Christ held that the prophecies contained in the Book of Daniel (from which he quoted) **came from Daniel himself**, not a later anonymous individual.
- Third, Christ assured that this prophecy describes **future events**, for the context shows that "*the abomination that causes desolation*" to which Christ referred was yet future. This means that arguments based on the premise that the prophets never foretold the distant future are invalid.
- Fourth, apparently the only view in vogue during the time of Christ for the setting of the prophet Daniel was the **sixth century B.C**.; therefore if Christ treated Daniel as a historical individual, **he also assumed the sixth-century date**.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK:

2 different approaches: very similar

1) **Linguistic Approach** – based on which sections were written in Hebrew vs. Aramaic

Chap. 1 -- (Hebrew) Introduction – Personal Background of Daniel

Chaps 2-7 --	(Aramaic)	Prophecies related to Gentiles
Chaps. 8-12 --	(Hebrew)	Prophecies related to Jewish nation during the times of the Gentiles

2) **Traditional approach** – 2 halves to the book: Historical Stories and Prophetic Visions

Tremper Longman III: Daniel is a book of **paradoxes**. The first six chapters are deceptively simple stories of faith under pressure. Daniel and his three friends have been forced to leave their homeland, Israel, and settle in the Babylonian king's palace. They are compelled to learn foreign ways in preparation to serve the government, which has made a hostile incursion against Israel and looms dangerously over that country of their birth. Each chapter brings new challenges, and each time they rise to meet the crisis. Neither Daniel nor his three friends waver in their faith or ponder their actions. They certainly seek divine help, but they are confident in their God, even if God might not preserve their lives through a trial (cf. **3:16–18**). God, however, is up to the task, demonstrating his sovereignty, his power over evil human intentions, again and again. Clear and encouraging, these six stories have spoken forcefully to many believers, including the youngest of children. Many of us who grew up in the church remember the stories of Daniel as a staple of children's Sunday school programs and vacation Bible school lessons.

Not so with the second half of the book, however! The simple division between chapters 6 and 7 masks a radical shift in genre and complexity. While children resonate with the lessons of Daniel **1–6**, seasoned Bible scholars scratch their heads over **Daniel 7–12** with the move from simple stories to obscure apocalyptic visions. The first half of the book are stories about Daniel; the second half are visions of Daniel. Even though there is a dramatic contrast in genre between the two halves of the book, however, the overall message of the book is uniform: In spite of present appearances, **God is in control**. . .

As we study the book of Daniel, we expect to hear God's story. The book is filled with human characters and actions, but God is the subtle background character. We have also just argued that the Old Testament, including Daniel, is not just a theocentric book, but also a **Christocentric** book. Christ is anticipated in the Old Testament and proclaimed in the New. By emphasizing what might be called the theological message of the book, we avoid a common fallacy—**a purely moralistic approach** to the Old Testament. Most sermons and teaching on the book err by falling into the trap of simply turning Old Testament characters into heroes and villains: "Be like Daniel!" or "Don't be like Belshazzar!" Such teaching removes the focus of the biblical book from the intended main point, **God**, and thus misses the power of the passage.

Chap 1 -- **THE SOVEREIGN GOD RAISES UP LOYAL LEADERS AND EQUIPS THEM TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSES – DIETARY TEST**
QUALIFICATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

(:1-2) PROLOGUE – BACKGROUND OF BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY
"*In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim*

king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god."

I. (:3) YOUNG MEN OF POTENTIAL

"*Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles,*"

A. Their Nature -- young men of the royal family
B. Their Advantages **--** the best environment and training
C. Their Age -- the timing was right to develop these men for leadership

II. (:4a) YOUNG MEN OF PROVEN WORTH

A. Physical Excellence **–** no defect / good looking
B. Intellectual Excellence
"*showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding, and discerning knowledge,*"
C. Summary of Overall Ability –
"*and who had ability for serving in the king's court*"

III. (:4b-5) YOUNG MEN OF PREPARATION

IV. (:6-7) YOUNG MEN OF PROVIDENTIAL PURPOSE

V. (:8-16) YOUNG MEN OF PURITY -- Refusal to compromise convictions

VI. (:17-21) YOUNG MEN OF PROSPERITY (:17-21)

Chap. 2 -- *MAN'S INABILITY VS GOD'S SUFFICIENCY* – GENTILE KINGDOMS TRUE WISDOM AND POWER COME FROM THE SOVEREIGN GOD

I. (:1-18) MAN'S INABILITY

A. (:1-3) The Inability of Man's Power
B. (:4-13) The Inability of Man's Wisdom
C. (:14-18) The Inability of Genuine Spiritual Leaders (in themselves)

II. (:19-30) THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE SOVEREIGN GOD – OUR SOURCE FOR TRUE WISDOM AND POWER

III. (:31-45) DREAM OF THE GREAT STATUE AND ITS INTERPRETATION DELIVERED BY DANIEL

God sovereignly allowed Gentiles to dominate Israel – <u>Stages of Gentile domination</u>:

Gold	Babylon	(605–539 B.C.),
Silver	Medo-Persia	(539–331 B.C.),
Bronze	Greece	(331–146 B.C.),

Iron Rome (146 B.C.–A.D. 476),
and all the way to the Second Advent of Christ

Remember, these future kingdoms have not yet come on the world's stage. It is remarkable the level of detail this book provides to future historical events.

(:46-49) EPILOGUE – RESPONSE OF KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR
"*Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries*"

Chap. 3 -- *THE SUPREMACY OF GOD VS PAGAN IDOLATRY – FIERY FURNACE*

I. (:1-12) IDOLATRY CHALLENGES THE SUPREMACY OF GOD AND CREATES INTENSE PERSECUTION

II. (:13-23) THE SUPREMACY OF GOD DESERVES UNSWERVING LOYALTY REGARDLESS OF THE COST

A. (:13-15) The Loyalty of Men of Faith (in God's Supremacy) Bothers Men of Pride (in Their Own Supremacy)

1. (:13) Proud Rulers Are Angry When Their Supremacy is Challenged
"*Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.*"

2. (:14) Proud Rulers Are Mystified When Confronted with Faith
"*Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, 'Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?'*"

3. (:15a) Proud Rulers Are Bullies at Heart
"*Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe, and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you will not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire;*"

4. (:15b) Proud Rulers Are Arrogant about Their Own Power and Skeptical about the Power of God
"*and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"*

B. (:16-18) Idolatry Should Never Be an Option for Those Who Understand the Supremacy of God

C. (:19-23) The Price of Loyalty May Be Intense Persecution – Circumstances May Look Hopeless

III. (:24-30) THE SUPREME GOD IS ABLE TO SAVE HIS LOYAL SERVANTS

Different ways God can deliver His faithful servants

- Protect them from even having to experience the suffering
- Deliver them thru the trial so that they experience the suffering but remain protected
- Deliver them via death

Chap. 4 – Who's In Charge? DEALING WITH NEBUCHADNEZZAR
THE MOST HIGH IS RULER OVER THE REALM OF MANKIND AND BESTOWS AUTHORITY ON WHOMEVER HE WISHES

(:17) Humbling Lesson

"*This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers*
And the decision is a command of the holy ones,
In order that the living may know
That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind,
And bestows it on whom He wishes
And sets over it the lowliest of men."

(:29-30) Consumed with Pride and Arrogance

"*Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'*"

Doesn't this sound like a press conference from our President today? These lessons are so applicable to the times of the Gentiles in which we live today.

(:34) Lesson Learned – Praise for God's Sovereignty and Everlasting Dominion

"*But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation.*"

(:35) Inability of Man to Thwart or Even Question God's Purposes

"*All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,*
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven
And among the inhabitants of earth;
And no one can ward off His hand
Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"

Chap. 5 – The Handwriting on the Wall – Numbered, Weighed and Rejected
DEALING WITH BELSHAZZAR

I. (:1-4) PARTY ATMOSPHERE OF THE WORLD OBLIVIOUS TO IMPENDING DOOM

This is how the world is currently living as people deny divine accountability and mock the promise of the Lord's return (**2 Pet. 3:3-4**).

"*Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, [4] and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.*'"

II. (:5-9) PANIC ATTACK OVER THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

III. (:10-16) PERSONAL APPEAL TO DANIEL AND HIS GOD FOR INSIGHT

IV. (:17-28) PROPHETIC APPLICATION OF THE DIVINE INSCRIPTION

Rebuke of pride and arrogance; you have not learned from God's judgment on Nebuchadnezzar; call for repentance

(:22-23a) Pride and Arrogance

"*Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, 23 but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven;*"

(25-28) – The interpretation of the inscription

"*Now this is the inscription that was written out: 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.' [26] This is the interpretation of the message: 'MENE '-- God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. [27] 'TEKEL '-- you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. [28] 'PERES '-- your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.*"

(:29-31) POSTSCRIPT

A. (:29) Elevation of Daniel

"*Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.*"

B. (:30) Execution of Belshazzar

"*That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain.*"

C. (:31) Exaltation of Darius the Mede

"*So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.*"

Chap. 6 -- *THE GOD WHO DELIVERS* – DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

I. (:1-9) CONSPIRING AGAINST DANIEL –
GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS COME UNDER ATTACK

II. (:10-15) CATCHING DANIEL IN VIOLATION OF THE DECREE –
GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS MUST REMAIN LOYAL IN THE FACE OF DANGER

III. (:16-18) CONFINING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN –
GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS CAN FIND THEMSELVES IN THE LIONS' DEN

IV. (:19-24) CELEBRATING DANIEL'S DELIVERANCE –
GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS TESTIFY TO GOD'S DELIVERANCE

V. (:25-28) CATECHIZING DANIEL'S GOD –
GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS IMPACT OTHERS FOR GOD WHILE ENJOYING UNPRECEDENTED FAVOR

A. (:25-27) Salvation Belongs to the Sovereign God

"*Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language who were living in all the land: 'May your peace abound! 26 I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever. 27 He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.'*"

B. (:28) Success Enjoyed by Daniel

"*So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*"

Chap. 7 -- *DREAMS OF THE FOUR GREAT BEASTS, THE ANCIENT OF DAYS, THE SON OF MAN AND THE ANTICHRIST*

SUCCESSIVE EVIL EMPIRES DOMINATE THE WORLD SCENE UNTIL
GOD REIGNS VICTORIOUS WITH HIS SAINTS IN HIS KINGDOM

Repeats and expands upon the image of **Chap. 2** with the 4 Gentile kingdoms
Chronologically, **Chap. 7** represents a flashback to 553 BC, 14 years before the feast of Belshazzar in **Chap. 5**. The dream of **Daniel 7** moves far beyond Daniel's day to the end times events. There is a type of both near and far term fulfillment in much that is revealed in these later chapters.

Stephen Miller: Why is this chapter so significant?

- First, Dan 7 marks the literary turning point of the book from historical accounts to visions. J. J. Collins correctly understands **Dan 7** to be "a transitional chapter" bound to the preceding stories "by the use of the Aramaic language and by affinities with **ch. 2**, but tied to the following visions by its subject matter." Thus this passage effectively **joins the two parts of the book together**.

- Second, the chapter is important because of its enormous impact on subsequent Jewish literature. As a matter of fact, the whole body of **apocalyptic material** that followed was influenced by this vision.

- Third, it is of extreme significance **prophetically**. Walvoord rightly maintains: "As interpreted by conservative expositors, the vision of Daniel provides the most comprehensive and detailed prophecy of future events to be found anywhere in the Old Testament."

I.(:2-8) DREAM OF THE FOUR GREAT BEASTS AND THE LITTLE HORN

II. (:9-14) DREAM OF THE ANCIENT OF DAYS AND HIS MILLENNIAL DOMINION DELEGATED TO THE SON OF MAN

III. (:15-27) INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAMS OF DANIEL

(:28) EPILOGUE – END OF THE VISION

Ken Boa: **Remaining Chapters:**
Focus in **Chap. 8** narrows to a vision of the ram and goat – looking at Israel under the Medo-Persian and Greek empires

8:21 – Alexander the Great is the big horn;
8:23 – Antiochus Epiphanes is the little horn

Chap 9 – Chronology of God's redemption of His people
Chaps. 10-11 – amazing details about future events

Chap. 11 – chronicles the coming kings of Persia and Greece; the wars between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria and the persecution led by Antiochus

Chap. 12 – God's people will be saved out of tribulation and resurrected

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Chap. 7-8 – Antiochus IV vs. Antichrist

Stephen Miller: Antiochus IV seems to be a type of the eschatological Antichrist. By examining the life of this ancient king, believers are instructed concerning the character and career of the future ruler. Many parallels exist between the two individuals, suggesting that **Antiochus prefigured the Antichrist:**

- Antiochus (**8:9**) and Antichrist (**7:8**) are symbolized by horns that were "*little*" or "*small*" at the beginning. Representing both kings as little horns supports the idea that one king prefigures the other.
- Antiochus was "*a stern-faced king*" (**8:23**), and Antichrist will have an "*imposing*" look (**7:20**). Both of these descriptions imply cruelty and harshness.
- Antiochus was "*a master of intrigue*" (**8:23**), and the brilliance of the Antichrist is suggested by the "*eyes*" of the horn (**7:8, 20**). The ability to offer seemingly correct solutions to the world's perplexing problems may be one factor that will catapult Antichrist to power.
- Antiochus had great power (**8:24**); Antichrist will have greater power (cf. **11:39; 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:7–8**). Yet **8:24** says that it was not Antiochus's "*own power*." His power was that of **Satan**, who controlled him, and this satanic inspiration was the reason he attempted to destroy God's people, the Jews. Antichrist also will be energized by Satan (cf. **2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:2**), and this is one reason he will attack God's people as well.
- Antiochus destroyed thousands (8:24); Antichrist will destroy more (**Rev 13:15; 16:13–16**).

- Antiochus prospered for a short while (**8:24**), and Antichrist will prosper for a brief time (**11:36; Rev 17:12**).
- Antiochus persecuted the saints (**8:24**); Antichrist also will oppress believers (**7:21, 25; Rev 13:7**).
- Antiochus was a deceiver (**8:25**); Antichrist will be the master deceiver (**2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:4, 14; 19:20**).
- Antiochus was proud (**8:25**). He called himself Epiphanes ("*the illustrious one*" or "*God manifest*"), although the Jews called him Epimanes ("*madman*"). Antichrist, however, will be one of the most arrogant individuals the world has ever known (**7:8, 11, 20, 25; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:5**).
- Antiochus blasphemed God (**8:25**); Antichrist will blaspheme God (**7:25; 11:36; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:5–6**).
- Antiochus was not killed by human hand (**8:25**), nor will be the Antichrist (**2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:19–20**).

Chap. 9 -- *PROPHECY OF SEVENTY-SEVENS UNFOLDS ISRAEL'S FUTURE*

9:24-27 – This prophecy pinpoints the chronology of the coming of the Messiah – Note that this prophecy was directed to the Jewish nation

"*Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place.* [25] *So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.*"

- <u>starting point</u> = decree – 444-445 BC
  [there are several other decrees issued earlier]
  - Decrees by Cyrus (**Ezra 1**) and Darius I (**Ezra 6**) – these focus on the temple
  - Artaxerxes I's First Decree (457 BC) – Given to Ezra (**Ezra 7**)
  - Artaxerxes I's Second Decree (444/445 BC) – Given to Nehemiah (**2:1-8**)
- 483 years (69 X 7) or 173,880 days using 360 day prophetic years –
  this leads to the date of the **Triumphal Entry** = <u>the ending point</u>
  [Some calculations have the ending date as the baptism of Jesus when He entered public ministry]

We are living in the <u>gap</u> between <u>Week 69</u> and <u>Week 70</u> = the Church Age

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Chap. 12:1-3 -- THE CLIMAX OF GOD'S PROGRAM FOR ISRAEL INVOLVES
- RESCUE FROM SEVERE TRIBULATION,
- RESURRECTION TO ETERNAL LIFE AND
- REWARD FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE

I.(:1) RESCUE FROM SEVERE TRIBULATION

"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued."

II. (:2) RESURRECTION TO ETERNAL LIFE –
CONTRAST IN RESURRECTION DESTINY

"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake,
these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."

III. (:3) REWARD FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE --
CAPACITY TO SHINE AS STARS – RADIATING THE GLORY OF GOD

"And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."

John MacArthur: I really believe what you have here is this, the concept that in eternity we will be rewarded by the capacity to manifest the blazing glory of God. There are little stars and there are big stars as we look in the sky, right? They're all stars and they're all beauty – beautiful, but all of them have a different beauty.

And I believe in eternity we will shine as stars. And I believe that the capacity to glorify God will be dependent upon our faithfulness. We'll all shine like the brightness of the firmament. In other words, we will all have the capacity to eternally radiate the glory of God. We'll all be blazing suns in eternity. But there's a special glow for they that turn many to righteousness. They shall shine as the stars forever and ever

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Chap. 12:4-13 -- *FINAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DANIEL REGARDING THE LAST DAYS*
GOD EXERCISES CONTROL OVER THE NATIONS UNTIL THE VERY END WHEN HE WILL SAVE AND PROSPER ISRAEL SO REMAIN FAITHFUL NOW IN ANTICIPATION OF FUTURE REWARD

Wayne Barber: There are <u>six instructions</u> that Daniel gets for the final days. Things that God wants him to be informed about, things that He wants him to do up until the time of the prophecy:

1. Daniel is to preserve his book for the people of the last days
2. Daniel is told the tribulation is necessary so that Israel might be saved
3. Daniel is to stop asking questions that don't concern him
4. Daniel is not to worry about Israel
5. Everything God told Daniel has a timetable to it
6. Daniel was told to stay faithful to the end and he will be rewarded

Vs. 12-13 "*How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!* [13] *But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age*."

REASONS TO STUDY THE BOOK:

- We need heroic examples of **uncompromising faith and courage** in standing up for God against the pressures of a Satanic dominated culture. How can we be holy and yet still have an impact on the world around us?

  Chorus: Refrain:

  Dare to be a Daniel!
  Dare to stand alone!
  Dare to have a purpose firm!
  Dare to make it known!

- We need insights into **spiritual leadership**. How does God prepare a man for leadership? How does leadership manifest itself?
- We need to be reminded of **God's sovereign control** over all the nations, over history and over our individual lives so that we come to rest in His Providential care.
- We need to be **warned against pride** so that our confidence is not in our own adequacy but in the God who enables and delivers us.
- We need the prophetic sections and the Messianic sections to give us confidence in God's faithfulness to His promises and **hope for the coming future manifestation of the kingdom of God.**

APPENDIX:

Andrew Hill: The book of Daniel presents a "**theology of history**." Theology is understood as the portrayal of the person and work of God as revealed in the Bible. History is considered the chronological record of significant events affecting a nation or institution (and often including an explanation of their causes). In one sense, God is always both "cause" and "effect" in biblical history since he "acts" in history so that Israel and the nations might know that he is the Lord (e.g., **Eze 5:5, 13**). The specific historical referent here is the nation of Israel as the people of God and the Hebrew institutions of Yahweh's temple and the Davidic monarchy.

Naturally this study of history spills over to include other nations since biblical Israel existed in a particular time and space continuum (cf. **Dt 7:6–8**). Beyond this, the destinies of Israel and all other people groups are entwined because God chose one nation to bless all nations (**Ge 12:1–3**). Daniel's "theology of history" is summarized in **Nebuchadnezzar's confession** that God lives forever, his dominion is eternal, he rules the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth, and nothing can prevent him from accomplishing his purposes in the world (**Da 4:3, 34–35**).

A theology of history was essential for the Israelites exiled in Babylonia because they suffered from an intense condition of theological shock. The four pillars of divine promise that undergirded Israel's confidence in Yahweh have been identified as: the irrevocability of God's (Sinaitic) covenant with Israel, Yahweh's ownership of the land of Canaan, Yahweh's eternal covenant with David, and Yahweh's residence in Jerusalem. How were the captive Hebrews to understand the reality that Jerusalem had been sacked, Yahweh's temple razed, the Davidic dynasty terminated, and a substantial population of Israelites deported to Babylonia?

The several distinct components comprising Daniel's theology of history may be outlined as follows:

- God is sovereign over his creation as the God of gods and Lord of kings (**2:47**), and he determines the destiny of nations (**1:2**), dispenses knowledge and understanding (**1:17**), possesses all power and wisdom (**2:20**), appoints and deposes kings (**2:21**), reveals deep and hidden things—including the future (**2:22; 7:17–18; 8:19; 10:14**)—exercises eternal dominion (4**:3; 7:14**), controls the fate of individuals (**5:23**), performs signs and wonders and rescues and saves (**3:28–29; 6:27**), and keeps his covenant of love (**9:4**). Davies summarizes that as the God of history Yahweh knows all, controls all, and rescues.

- The people of God living under his sovereign rule must trust in his control, accept responsibility for their actions, and look to the future in hope. Prayer is the vehicle for this hopeful outlook and the catalyst for change. Daniel's example and message assure the Hebrews that despite the fact that the Jerusalem temple—Yahweh's house of prayer—is destroyed, he still hears and answers prayer. Prayer to Yahweh may or may not bring deliverance (as the testimony of Daniel's three friends acknowledges; **3:16–18**). That is not the point, however, but rather the posture of faithfulness toward God in the face of trial, whether that posture results in deliverance or martyrdom. It is through prayer that Israel maintains covenantal relationship with God (**1Ki 8:30**), and prayer is one means by which order is recovered out of chaos (**1Ki 8:34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 50**; cf. **Jas 5:16**).

- God's people living under his sovereign rule must discern that not all suffering is retributive -- based on the blessings and curses of covenantal relationship with Yahweh (cf. **Dt 28**). Daniel warns God's people of times of persecution and oppression ahead inflicted by the nations ruling over Israel (**Da 7:25; 8:24; 11:16, 24**). Unlike the divine judgment of the Babylonian exile, they need to know that this suffering is not necessarily punishment for sin but divine discipline for purification (**11:35**). Daniel makes it clear that this "*time of distress*" is temporary (**11:32**) and that the true people of God will persevere and experience deliverance (**12:1**). Death itself proves to be no barrier to God's sovereignty or faithfulness, as the promise of resurrection will bring vindication to the righteous who die as a result of the persecution (**12:2–3**).

- God's people living under his sovereign rule must recognize that a series of empires must rise and fall and that an interim period of "waiting" must elapse before the kingdom of God breaks into history (**12:4, 9–13**). This means God's promises for Israel's restoration after the exile, as forecast by Jeremiah (e.g., **Jer 31:31–34**) and Ezekiel (e.g., **Eze 34:23–25; 37:24–25**), have not failed but will be delayed until God's purposes are accomplished through the historical process of the rise and fall of nations. This ability to make known to his people such things pertaining to the future is both a mark of God's omniscience and an act of his grace (cf. **Isa 41:21–22; 44:26–27**).

OUTLINE OF DANIEL

BIG IDEA:

THE SUPREME GOD REIGNS OVER ALL AND IS WORKING OUT HIS KINGDOM PROGRAM FOR ISRAEL DOWN THROUGH HISTORY

(:1-2) PROLOGUE – BACKGROUND OF BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

I. (1:3-6:28) HISTORICAL SECTION – GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN HISTORY – THE SUPREME GOD DELIVERS HIS PEOPLE AND RULES OVER ALL THE NATIONS

A. (1:3-21) The Test -- Dependency on God vs Dependency on Man -- Men Fit for Serving the King -- Qualifications for Spiritual Leadership – The Sovereign God Raises Up Loyal Leaders and Equips Them to Accomplish His Purposes

1. (:3) Young Men of Potential
   - a. Their Nature
   - b. Their Advantages
   - c. Their Age
2. (:4a) Young Men of Proven Worth
   - a. Physical Excellence
   - b. Intellectual Excellence
   - c . Summary of Overall Ability
3. (:4b-5) Young Men of Preparation
   - a. The Proper Teacher
   - b. The Appropriate Course of Study
   - c. The Provision of Material Needs
   - d. The Prescribed Period of Training
4. (:6-7) Young Men of Providential Purpose
5. (:8-16) Young Men of Purity
   - a. (:8) Sanctified Determination of Daniel
   - b. (:9) Special Favor Granted by the Lord
   - c. (:10) Sincere Fear of the Commander in Charge of Daniel and His Friends
   - d. (:11-14) Specific Proposal to the Overseer
   - e. (:15-16) Successful Results of the Test
6. (:17-21) Young Men of Prosperity
   - a. (:17) Prospered with Special Wisdom and Insight
   - b. (:18-20) Prospered with Responsible Opportunities for Service
   - c. (:21) Prospered with Peace and Security

B. (2:1-49) The Vision of a Great Statue -- Man's Inability Requires God's Sufficiency – True Wisdom and Power Come From the Sovereign God

1. (:1-18) Man's Inability
   - a. (:1-3) The Inability of Man's Power -- Picture of Nebuchadnezzar

1) (:1) Troubled Spirit of the King
2) (:2-3) Turning to His Trusted Advisers for Help

b. (:4-13) The Inability of Man's Wisdom --
Picture of Educated Men and Spiritual Imposters, Diviners, etc.
1) (:4) Testimony of Inability of Man's Wisdom (Redefining the Mission)
2) (:5-6) Two Possible Outcomes
3) (:7-9) Tactic of Stalling When Pressed for Results
4) (:10-11) Testimony of Inability of Man's Wisdom
5) (:12-13) Temper Tantrum and Execution Orders from the Frustrated King

c. (:14-18) The Inability of Genuine Spiritual Leaders (in themselves) --
Picture of Daniel -- God's Servant in Time of Crisis
1) (:14) Importance of Responding with Discretion and Discernment
2) (:15) Importance of Determining the Root Issue
3) (:16) Importance of Confessing Our Limitations
4) (:17-18) Importance of Galvanizing the Support of Intercessory Prayer

2. (:19-30) The Sufficiency of the Sovereign God --
Our Source for True Wisdom and Power

a. (:19-23) Praising God for the Sufficiency of His Wisdom and Power
1) (:20) Wisdom and Power Revealed as Attributes of God's Character
2) (:21-22) Wisdom and Power Revealed in the Sovereign Actions of God
3) (:23) Wisdom and Power Gifted to God's People in Times of Crisis

b. (:24-30) Testifying to the Sufficiency of God's Wisdom and Power
1) (:24-25) Gaining an Audience with the King
2) (:26-28a) Glorifying God as the Revealer of Dreams
3) (:29) Granting the King's Request
4) (:30) Guarding against Any Personal Credit for This Revelation

3. (:31-45) Dream of the Great Statue and Its Interpretation Delivered by Daniel

a. (:31-35) The Dream
1) (:31-33) Summary of the Initial Vision of the Awesome Statue
2) (:34-35a) Stone Smashing the Statue
3) (:35b) Stone Transformed into a Majestic Worldwide Mountain

b. (:36-44) The Interpretation
1) (:37-38) Current Kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar Identified as the Head of God
2) (:39-40) Subsequent Three Kingdoms Will Arise
3) (:44) Ultimate Kingdom of God Will Crush All Other Kingdoms and Endure Forever

c. (:45) Authenticity and Reliability of This Dream and This Interpretation

(:46-49) Epilogue – Response of King Nebuchadnezzar

a. (:46) Prostrating Himself before Daniel
b. (:47) Proclaiming the Supremacy and Wisdom of Daniel's God
c. (:48-49) Promoting Daniel and His Friends to Leadership Positions

C. (3:1-30) <u>The Fiery Furnace</u> -- The Supremacy of God vs Pagan Idolatry – The God Who Is Supreme in Saving Power Deserves Our Unswerving Loyalty Despite the Pressure of Intense Persecution

1. (:1-12) Idolatry Challenges the Supremacy of God and Creates Intense Persecution
   - (:1) Nebuchadnezzar Sets Up His Image of Gold to be Worshiped
     1) Motivated by Pride, Nebuchadnezzar Exalts Himself
     2) Massive Statue = Impressive Visual Display of Supremacy
     3) Majestic Setting
   - a. (:2-6) Proud Men in Positions of Power Challenge God's Authority and Standards, Promote Idolatry, and Threaten Persecution
     1) (:2-3) Collection of Powerful Leaders for the Dedication of the Idol
     2) (:4-5) Command to Worship the Golden Image
     3) (:6) Coercion via Threat of the Fiery Furnace = Bow or Burn
   - b. (:7) The Masses Promote Idolatry By the Pressure of Conformity (:7)
   - c. (:8-12) The Enemies of God's People Make Every Effort to Enforce Idolatry
2. (:13-23) The Supremacy of God Deserves Unswerving Loyalty Regardless of the Cost
   - a. (:13-15) The Loyalty of Men of Faith (in God's Supremacy) Bothers Men of Pride (in Their Own Supremacy)
     1) (:13) Proud Rulers Are Angry When Their Supremacy is Challenged
     2) (:14) Proud Rulers Are Mystified When Confronted with Faith
     3) (:15a) Proud Rulers Are Bullies at Heart
     4) (:15b) Proud Rulers Are Arrogant about Their Own Power and Skeptical about the Power of God
   - b. (:16-18) Idolatry Should Never Be An Option for Those Who Understand the Supremacy of God
     1) (:16) No Debate or Indecision – the Issue is Cut and Dried
     2) (:17) No Doubt about God's Ability to Save
     3) (:18) No Dictating of Terms to God
   - c. (:19-23) The Price of Loyalty May Be Intense Persecution – Circumstances May Look Hopeless
     1) (:19a) Intensified Wrath of the King
     2) (:19b) Intensified Temperature of the Furnace
     3) (:20) Involvement of Valiant Warriors
     4) (:21) Immobilized, Wrapped in Flammable Garments and Cast into the Heart of the Furnace
     5) (:22-23) Irony of Two Contrasting Outcomes
3. (:24-30) The Supreme God is Able to Save His Loyal Servants
   - a. (:24-25) The Living God Can Manifest His Presence in the Fiery Furnace
   - b. (:26-27) The Most High God Can Deliver His Servants From the Fiery Trial with No Ill Effects – Unbowed and Unburned
   - c. (:28) The Supreme God Can Glorify Himself as the One Who Delivers His Loyal Servants
   - d. (:29) Deliverance Can Lead to Enhanced Security for Future Worship
   - e. (:30) Deliverance Can Lead to Overwhelming Prosperity

D. (4:1-37) <u>The Vision of a Great Tree</u> -- The Authority of God – Who's in Charge?

The Most High is Ruler over the Realm of Mankind and Bestows Authority on Whomever He Wishes

(:1-3) Prologue: Royal Decree = Praise for God's Everlasting Dominion
- a. (:1) Greeting From King Nebuchadnezzar
- b. (:2-3) Testimony Praising God
  - 1) Testimony of God's Personal Intervention and Provision
  - 2) Testimony of God's Power
  - 3) Testimony of God's Permanence and Dominion

1. (4-18) The Dream
   - a. (:4-5) Disturbing Nature of the Dream
   - b. (:6-9) Different Options for Interpretation
     - 1) (:6-7) Option #1 = Secular Babylonian Sources
     - 2) (:8-9) Option #2 =Spiritual Connection to the Holy Gods = Daniel / Belteshazzar
   - c. (:10-17) Details of the Dream
     - 1) (:10-12) Huge Tree
     - 2) (:13-16) Holy Messenger
     - 3) (:17) Humbling Lesson
   - d. (:18) Demand that Daniel Provide the Interpretation
2. (19-27) The Interpretation
   - a. (:19) Appalling Nature of the Interpretation
   - b. (:20-22) Interpretation of the Huge Tree = King Nebuchadnezzar
   - c. (:23-26) Interpretation of the Holy Messenger and the Humbling Lesson
   - d. (:27) Application and Counsel
3. (28-33) The Historical Fulfillment
   - a. (:28) Summary Statement
   - b. (:29-30) Situation = Consumed with Pride
   - c. (31-32) Sovereignty = the Issue
   - d. (:33) Shocking Fulfillment
4. (:34-37) The Lesson Learned
   - a. (:34) Lesson Learned – Praise for God's Sovereignty and Everlasting Dominion
   - b. (:35) Inability of Man to Thwart or Even Question God's Purposes
   - c. (:36) Restoration and Exaltation of Nebuchadnezzar's Reign
   - d. (:37) Lesson Learned – Praise for God's Sovereignty, Justice and Humbling of the Proud

E. (5:1-31) <u>The Handwriting on the Wall</u> – Numbered, Weighted and Rejected Some Day the Party Will Be Over Abruptly For Any World System That Rejects God

1. (:1-4) Party Atmosphere of the World Oblivious to Impending Doom
   - a. (:1) Indulgent Celebration
   - b. (:2-3) Irreverent Consumption
     - 1) (:2) Supreme Arrogance
     - 2) (:3) Sacrilegious Abomination
   - c. (:4) Idolatrous Carousing
2. (:5-9) Panic Attack over the Handwriting on the Wall
   - a. (:5-6) Divine Authorship of Indictment
     - 1) (:5) The Writing of the Hand
     - 2) (:6) The Reaction of the King

b. (:7-9) Desperate Attempt at Interpretation
1) (:7) Reward Offered
2) (:8) Remains a Mystery
3) (:9) Reaction of the King

3. (:10-16) Personal Appeal to Daniel and His God for Insight
a. (:10-12) Daniel Recommended by the Queen
1) (:10) Intervention by the Queen
2) (:11-12a) Introduction of Daniel with Impressive Credentials
3) (:12b) Instructions to Summon Daniel with the Expectation of Illumination
b. (:13-16) Daniel Summoned and Incentivized for Interpreting the Dream
1) (:13-14) Daniel Summoned and Praised for His Stellar Reputation
2) (:15) Daniel Contrasted with the Failure of the Babylonian Soothsayers
3) (:16) Daniel Incentivized

4. (:17-28) Prophetic Application of the Divine Inscription
a. (:17) Right Interpretation Not Conditioned on Reward
b. (:18-19) Royal Dominion Conditioned on Divine Favor and Delegated Authority
c. (:20-21) Repentance Conditioned on Humiliating Judgment
1) (:20a) Heart Attitude to Be Judged = Pride and Arrogance
2) (:20b-21a) Punishment to Be Experienced
3) (:22b) Lesson to Be Learned = Key to Repentance
d. (:22-23) Repetition of the Sins of Your Father
1) (:22-23a) Pride and Arrogance
2) (:23b) Profane and Irreverent Sacrilege and Fleshly Indulgence
3) (:23c) Praise of Impotent Idols Instead of Glorifying the Life-Giving God
e. (:24-28) Record of God's Written Indictment
1) (:24-25) The Inscription
2) (:26-28) The Interpretation

(:29-31) Postscript
a. (:29) Elevation of Daniel
b. (:30) Execution of Belshazzar
c. (:31) Exaltation of Darius the Mede

F. (6:1-28) <u>Daniel in the Lions' Den</u> – The God Who Delivers –
God Can Rescue His Faithful Servants from Treacherous Enemies –
Even From the Mouths of Lions

1. (:1-9) Conspiring against Daniel –
God's Faithful Servants Come under Attack
a. (:1-3) Administration of the Kingdom
1) (:1-2) Delegation of Authority
2) (:3) Distinguishing of Daniel
b. (:4-5) Accusations by Daniel's Envious Enemies
1) (:4) No Legitimate Faults
2) (:5) Looking for a Religious Snare
c. (:6-10) Appeal to the King's Ego to Trap Daniel
2. (:10-15) Catching Daniel in Violation of the Decree –

God's Faithful Servants Must Remain Loyal in the Face of Danger

a. (:10-13) Man of Integrity

1) (:10-11) Guilty of a Consistent Pattern of Prayer

2) (:12-13) Getting the King to Condemn Daniel

b. (:14-15) King in a Bind

1) (:14) Looking for a Loophole

2) (:15) Locked Into His Legislation

3. (:16-18) Confining Daniel in the Lions' Den –
God's Faithful Servants Can Find Themselves in the Lions' Den

a. (:16a) Abandonment

b. (:16b) Assurance

c. (:17) Authentication

d. (:18) Anxiety

4. (:19-24) Celebrating Daniel's Deliverance –
God's Faithful Servants Testify to God's Deliverance

a. (:19-20) Trepidation of the King

1) (:19) Investigation

2) (:20) Inquiry

b. (:21-22) Testimony of Daniel

c. (:23-24) Turnaround by the King

1) (:23) Release of Daniel

2) (:24) Retribution Against Daniel's Accusers

5. (:25-28) Catechizing Daniel's God –
God's Faithful Servants Impact Others for God While Enjoying Unprecedented Favor

a. (:25-27) Salvation Belongs to the Sovereign God

b. (:28) Success Enjoyed by Daniel

II. (7:1 – 12:3) PROPHETIC SECTION – GOD'S PURPOSE IN HISTORY

A. (7:1-28) Vision of the Four Great Beasts, the Ancient of Days, the Son of Man and the Antichrist

(:1) Prologue – Daniel Records His Dream

1. (:2-8) Dream of the Four Great Beasts and the Little Horn

a. (:2-3) Overall Vision Summary of Four Great Beasts

b. (:4-7) Four Successive Fearsome Beasts

1) (:4) First Beast Like a Lion with Wings of an Eagle

2) (:5) Second Beast Like a Bear

3) (:6) Third Beast Like a Leopard

4) (:7) Fourth Beast Different from the Rest

c. (:8) Little Horn Emerges

2. (:9-14) Dream of the Ancient of Days and His Millennial Dominion Delegated to the Son of Man

a. (:9-10) Vision of the Ancient of Days – Preparation for Judgment

1) (:9a) Positioned on the Throne of Judgment

2) (:9b) Pictured as Wise and Honorable

3) (:9c-10a) Prepared to Dispense Fiery Judgment

4) (:10b) Poised to Execute Judgment

b. (:11-12) Vision of Victory over the Little Horn and the Beasts

1) (:11) Victory over the Little Horn at Armageddon

2) (:12) Victory over the Beasts

c. (:13-14) Vision of the Son of Man – Messianic Dominion

1) (:13) Son of Man Presented before the Ancient of Days

2) (:14) Son of Man Delegated Millennial Dominion Leading to Eternal Kingdom

3. (:15-27) Interpretation of the Dreams of Daniel

a. (:15) Alarming Nature of the Visions

b. (:16-18) Accurate Summary Interpretation = the Big Idea Statement

1) (:16) Inquiry into Meaning of God's Revelation

2) (:17) Interpretation of the Four Beasts

3) (:18) Inheritance for All Eternity

c. (:19-22) Analysis of the End Times

1) (:19) Meaning of the Fourth Beast

2) (:20) Meaning of the Ten Horns and Other Little Horn that Became Large

3) (:21-22) Millennial Kingdom Established after Victory and Judgment

d. (:23-27) Analysis of the End Times Repeated and Expanded

1) (:23) Meaning of the Fourth Beast

2) (:24-25) Meaning of the Ten Horns and the Other Horn

3) (:26-27) Millennial Kingdom Established after Victory and Judgment

(:28) Epilogue – End of the Vision

B. (:8:1-27) Vision of the Ram, Male Goat and Little Horn – Evil World Empires Magnify Their Power and Influence but Ultimately Will All Be Broken By the Sovereign Power of God

1. (:1-14) Vision of the Ram, Male Goat and Little Horn

a. (:1-4) Vision of the Ram with Two Horns

1) (:1) Timing and Sequencing of the Vision

2) (:2) Setting of the Vision

3) (:3-4) The Focal Point of the Vision = the Power of the Ram

b. (:5-8) Vision of the Male Goat Attacking the Ram = Alexander the Great

1) (:5) Description of the Male Goat

2) (:6-7) Destruction of the Ram by the Goat

3) (:8a) Magnification of the Male Goat

4) (:8b) Division of the Goat's Empire into Four Realms

c. (:9-12) Vision of the Little Horn = Antiochus IV Epiphanes

1) (:9) Dramatic Geographic Expansion

2) (:10) Degrading Persecution of God's People

3) (:11) Defilement of Worship

4) (:12) Dominion over the Truth

d. (:13-14) Duration of Temple Defilement and Subjugation

1) (:13) Query – How Long

2) (:14) Response – 2300 Days

2. (:15-26) Interpretation of the Vision by the Angel Gabriel

a. (:15-22) Interpretation of the Ram and the Male Goat

1) (:15-17) Angelic Exposition of the Vision

2) (:18-22) Accurate but Abbreviated Identification of the Details in the Vision

b. (:23-26) Interpretation of the Little Horn = Focus of the Vision –

Antiochus as a Type of Antichrist
1) (:23) Description of the Final Wicked King
2) (:24-25a) Details of His Power and Tactics
3) (:25b) Destruction by Divine Agency
4) (:26) Disposition of the Vision

(:27) Epilogue – Reaction of Daniel
a. Incapacitated
b. Focused
c. Perplexed

C. (:9:1-27) Prophecy of Seventy-Sevens Unfolds Israel's Future – Daniel's Prayer of Confession and Petition for Deliverance Prompt Revelation of God's Future Program for Israel

(:1-2) Prologue – Background for the Seventy-Sevens Prophecy
a. (:1-2a) Timing of the Prophecy
b. (:2b) Terminus of the Seventy Year Judgment on Jerusalem

1. (:3-19) Daniel's Prayer of Confession and Petition for Deliverance
a. (:3-4) Invocation -- Seeking the Covenant Lovingkindness of Israel's Great and Awesome God
1) (:3) Attention Aided by Outward Expression of Contrition
2) (:4) Adoration Expressed
b. (:5-14) Confession of Sin – Surrendering to the Righteousness of God and Soliciting the Mercy of God
1) (:5-6) Aspects of Israel's Iniquity Confessed
2) (:7-10) Surrendering to the Righteousness of God
3) (:11-14) Soliciting the Mercy of God
c. (:15-19) Petition for Deliverance
1) (:15) Appealing to God's Redemptive Power
2) (:16) Appealing to God's Mercy and Righteousness
3) (:17) Appealing to God's Covenant Commitment
4) (:18) Appealing to God's Great Compassion
5) (:19) Appealing to God's Honor and Reputation

2. (:20-27) Gabriel Explains Prophecy of Seventy-Sevens
a. (:20-23) Mediator of the Prophecy Relating to Jerusalem and the Temple
1) (:20-21) Appearance of the Angel Gabriel
2) (:22-23) Assignment Given to Gabriel
b. (:24-27) Substance of the Prophecy
1) (:24) General Parameters of the Prophecy
2) (:25) Initial Period of 69 Sevens (483 Years)
3) (:26-27) Final Events Including the 70th Week (Tribulation Period)

D. (10:1 – 12:3) Vision of Events During the Maccabean Era and the Latter Days

1. (10:1 – 11:1) Staging the Final Vision – Glorious Christophany and Strong Encouragement Prepare Daniel for the Concluding Vision that Reinforces God's Control over World Kingdoms

(10:1-3) Prologue – Background for the Concluding Vision
1) (:1) Significance of the Message
a) Due to Its Critical Timeline and Historical Setting
b) Due to Its Prophetic Target

c) Due to Its Authenticity and Difficulty
d) Due to Its Clarity and Application

2) (:2-3) Sober-Minded Preparation
a) (:2) Attitude of Spiritual Focus
b) (:3) Abstinence from Distractions

a. (10:4-9) Glorious Christophany Leaves Daniel Trembling
1) (:4) Staging for the Vision
a) Date
b) Place

2) (:5-6) Subject of the Vision = Glorious Preincarnate Christ
a) (:5) Expensively Dressed Person
b) (:6) Exalted Person

3) (:7-9) Severe Reaction to the Vision
a) (:7a) Unique Experience of Daniel
b) (:7b) Reaction of Terror on the Part of Daniel's Companions
c) (:8) Reaction of Being Drained of All Strength
d) (:9) Reaction of Fainting and Lying Prostrate on the Ground

b. (10:10-14) Contested Mission of Divine Encouragement
1) (:10-11) The Encouragement Provided by the Angel
a) (:10) Touched by the Divine Messenger
b) (:11) Testimony to Daniel's Privileged Status

2) (:12-14) The Purpose of the Angel's Visit
a) (:12) Sent in Response to Daniel's Petition for Understanding and Deliverance
b) (:13) Delayed by Powerful Spiritual Conflict
c) (:14) Focused on God's Program for Israel's Ultimate Future

c. (10:15 – 11:1) Goal of Strengthening Daniel to Understand the Revelation of God's Truth
1) (:15-17) Expression of Humility and Need for Divine Strengthening
a) (:15) Expression of Humility
b) (:16-17) Need for Divine Strengthening

2) (:18-21) Encouragement Provided to Daniel
a) (:18-19) Charge to Be Strong and Brave
b) (:20-21) Charge to Receive the Word of Truth

3) (11:1) Encouragement Provided by Daniel to Darius the Mede

2. (11:2-45) Prophecy Concerning World History as It Impacts Israel – World Events Causing Israel Turmoil are Predicted from Daniel's Time to Despicable Antiochus Epiphanes – Before Jumping Ahead to the Ultimate Antichrist in End Times

(:2A) Prologue – Authenticating This Amazing Prophecy

a. (:2b) Concerning Persia
1) Three Additional Kings
2) Fourth Extremely Wealthy King = Xerxes I
3) Conflict with Greece

b. (:3-4) Concerning Greece – A Mighty Warrior King
1) (:3) Alexander the Great
2) (:4) Fourfold Division of the Kingdom

c. (:5-20) Concerning Egypt and Syria (The Kings of the South = KS and the Kings of the North = KN)
    1) (:5-19) Conflicts between Southern and Northern Kings (Ptolemies and Seleucids)
        a) (:5-9) Conflict between Egypt and Syria
        b) (:10-12) Conflict Continued
        c) (:13-15) Antiochus III the Great Fights against Egypt
        d) (:16-19) Campaigns of Antiochus III the Great
    2) (:20) Northern King (Seleucus Philopator) Who Dispatches an Oppressor (Heliodorus)
d. (:21-35) Concerning Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Climactic King of the North) – Foreshadowing Future Antichrist – God's People Will Suffer Persecution in This Life
    1) (:21-24) His Rise to Power, 1st Campaign against Egypt and Scheming Tactics
        a) (:21) Usurping the Throne
        b) (:22) 1st Campaign against Egypt -- Overwhelming Forces and Key Leaders
        c) (:23) Deceptive Alliance with Egypt to Increase His Power
        d) (:24) Plunder and Distribution of Foreign Booty to Increase His Influence
    2) (:25-28) His 2nd Campaign against Egypt, Corrupt Diplomacy and Covenant Hostility
        a) (:25-26) 2nd Campaign against Egypt
        b) (:27) Corrupt Diplomacy
        c) (:28) Covenant Hostility
    3) (:29-35) His 3rd Campaign against Egypt
        a) (:29) 3rd Campaign against Egypt
        b) (:30a) Disheartening Opposition from Roman Ships
        c) (:30b) Renewed Rage against the Holy Covenant
        d) (:31) Attack on Worship and Erection of Abomination of Desolation
        e) (:32) Contrasting Responses by the Jews in Jerusalem
        f) (:33-35) Persecution of Godly Opposition
e. (:36-45) Concerning One Greater than Antiochus = Ultimate Antichrist (The King Who Will Do As He Pleases)
    1) (:36-39) Exaltation and Expansion of Power of the Antichrist in the Last Days
        a) (:36-37) Antichrist's Exaltation
        b) (:38-39) Antichrist's Expansion of Power
    2) (:40-45) Expeditions of the King of the North in the Last Days
        a) (:40) Antichrist Attacked in Pincer Fashion from the South and North
        b) (:41) Antichrist Invades Israel but Spares Israel's Historic Enemies
        c) (:42-43) Antichrist Enjoys Success against Egypt and Others
        d) (:44-45) Antichrist's Final Campaigns and Demise

3. (12:1-3) Final Deliverance and Reward of God's People Israel – The Climax of God's Program for Israel Involves

- Rescue from Severe Tribulation
- Resurrection to Eternal Life and
- Reward for Faithful Service

a. (:1) Rescue from Severe Tribulation – Certainty of Deliverance
   1) Supreme Defender of Israel = Michael
   2) Unprecedented Tribulation for Israel
   3) Purged Israel Delivered

b. (:2) Resurrection to Eternal Life – Contrast in Resurrection Destiny
   1) One Dramatic Event
   2) Two Different Destinies
   a) Resurrection to Everlasting Life
   b) Resurrection to Everlasting Disgrace and Contempt

c. (:3) Reward for Faithful Service – Capacity to Shine as Stars – Radiating the Glory of God

(12:4-13) EPILOGUE – FINAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DANIEL REGARDING THE LAST DAYS

A. (:4) Instructions to Preserve the Valuable Message of the Book

1. Message Needs to Be Preserved for the End Times
2. Message Will Be Searched Out as Valuable to Increase Insight into End Time Events

B. (:5-7) Instructions Regarding the Duration of the "Time of Distress"

1. (:5) Angelic Messengers – Witnesses to God's Revelation
2. (:6a) Addressing the Supreme Revealer of Divine Truth
3. (:6b) Anxious Inquiry: How Long Will the Great Tribulation Last?
4. (:7) Authoritative Response
   a. Solemnity and Certainty of the Response
   b. Specific Time Duration of the Great Tribulation
   c. Sovereign Purpose Involves Humbling Israel – Breaking Her Self-Sufficiency

C. (:8-13) Instructions Regarding the Eventual Outcome – Reward for the Righteous

1. (:8) Confusion of Daniel Regarding the Eventual Outcome
2. (:9) Curiosity Must Submit to Divine Concealment
3. (:10) Clarity Will Come to the Refined Righteous in the Last Days
4. (:11-12) Commitment to Endure to the End Will Be Key
   a. (:11) Revelation of Additional 30 Days
   b. (:12) Revelation of Additional 45 Days
5. (:13) Concern of Daniel Must be Faithful Living Now in Anticipation of Future Reward

TEXT: Daniel 1:1-21

TITLE: DEPENDENCY ON GOD VS DEPENDENCY ON MAN –
MEN FIT FOR SERVING THE KING --
QUALIFICATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

BIG IDEA:
THE SOVEREIGN GOD RAISES UP LOYAL LEADERS AND EQUIPS THEM TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSES

INTRODUCTION:

Andrew Hill: The opening chapter of Daniel introduces the "court stories" section of the book (**chs. 1–6**). These stories are narrative episodes told in the third person and relate the exploits of Daniel and his three companions during their captivity in Babylon. The content of ch. 1 may be outlined in four units:

- the first (**vv.1–2**) provides the **setting** of the book of Daniel (the royal court of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia and his successors; **v.1**), and the central theological theme of the book (God's sovereignty, as "*the Lord delivered*" Jehoiakim to the Babylonians; **v.2**);
- the second (**vv.3–7**) introduces the main characters, or **protagonists**, of the narratives—the Hebrew captives Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah;
- the third (**vv.8–17**) offers clues as to the key elements of the "**plot**" of the book as a narrative, especially
    - nonconformity to the dominant culture (**v.8**),
    - the testing of faith in God (**v.12**), and
    - divine provision (**v.17**);
- the final literary unit (**vv.18–21**) foreshadows the **outcome** of the court stories of the first half of the book—the success and longevity of the four Hebrew captives as officials in the royal court of Babylon.

Iain Duguid: How do you cope in the midst of the brokenness and alienation that is life here on earth? What truths can you cling to when the jagged edges of existence are twisting against you and cutting into your flesh? What do you need to know to live a life of faith in an alien world, a world that is frequently a place of sickness and pain, of broken relationships and bitter tears, of sorrow and death? These are the questions to which the Book of Daniel will give us the answers. It is a book written to God's Old Testament people, Israel, when they were experiencing the brokenness and pain of life in exile, far away from home. It was designed to encourage them in their walk with God, who was with them in the midst of their pain.

R.H. Charles: **The Object of this chapter**:
To enforce loyalty to the Law: to set forth the principles of a right education, i.e. obedience to the prescripts of the Law. The young so educated will prove to be best alike in body (**ver. 15**), and in mind (**ver. 17**), and also bet fitted to face the evils of their time. And, even when they are called to face death by torture in obedience to their

faith, as in **3**, they will be able to do so with a calm and resolute spirit and fearlessly withal. And yet the emphasis is laid expressly on that element in Judaism which is the least valuable and least essential in true religion – the law of clean and unclean meats. But to the Jews in the days of Antiochus the eating of meats form the king's table appeared as sinful as idolatry itself.

This chapter (**1:1-19**) deals with the discipline of the religious life and its fruitfulness – spiritual and other – for those who adopt it in their private relations.

John Goldingay: **Four Young Exiles Gain Insight and Prestige without Losing Holiness --** Daniel 1 forms a chiastically-shaped narrative composed of three double panels, the central pair being themselves subdivided chiastically. The story's plot tension builds through the first three panels, which occupy the opening two-thirds of the chapter (vv. 1–14). It is (largely) resolved by the latter three panels in the closing third (vv. 15–21).
Diagrammatically:

Panels	Verses		
1A	**1–2**	tension	Babylonians defeat Israel.
2A	**3–7**		Young men are taken for training.
3(i)A	**8**		Daniel wants to avoid defilement
3(ii)A	**9–14**		and takes on a test.
3(ii)B	**15**		Daniel is triumphant in the test
3(i)B	**16**		and avoids defilement.
2B	**17–20**		Young men are triumphant in the training.
1B	**21**		Daniel sees out the Babylonians.

The story is dominated by the decision making and activity of its human participants, but each double panel refers once to **God's activity**, each time using the verb "*give/make*." They affirm that God's giving lies behind three events that are surprising, for different reasons:

- Nebuchadnezzar's success in his siege of Jerusalem,
- Daniel's success in his negotiation with the palace, and
- the young men's success in their training.

The genius and the limitation of a story of this kind is its **concrete nature**. As it may be impossible to move from an "is" to an "ought," it may be impossible to move from a narrative statement to a general statement, from "Yahweh enabled Daniel to triumph" to "Yahweh will enable us to the triumph." But a concrete story describes what Yahweh has been known to do, and it opens up the possibility that he might do it again, or might do something analogous.

Max Lucado: **Obedience** is an expression of our love to God. Sometimes the world will try to hinder our obedience and tempt us to make small compromises to our values. This was certainly true in the case of Daniel and his three friends, who could have easily chosen to abandon their Jewish diet in favor of the rich delicacies of the king's diet plan. At such times, we have to resolve in our hearts to follow God's plan . . . and

perhaps get **creative** in the process. Daniel's alternate plan was not only creative but also a **step of faith**. The four men believed God would reward their obedience with physical health—and God did indeed bless them. Their robust health even caught the king's attention, and he affirmed them and promoted them to be his advisors.

Stephen Miller: In this chapter believers are shown that those who are faithful to God will reap divine blessings, a truth that should be an encouragement to Christians today. The world with all of its attractions and pressures still lures the believer to compromise (and even to forsake) the faith, but Daniel is a reminder that serving the Lord pays great dividends

(:1-2) PROLOGUE – BACKGROUND OF BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

> "*In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.*"

The moral and spiritual decline of Israel led to the coming of Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem and the Babylonian Captivity. This was a desperate time for the preservation of God's people. God uses evil men and nations to chastise His own people. God took away:

- Israel's power (her king and capital city)
- her pride (desecrating the temple and carrying off the vessels)
- her people

Daniel and his friends were being groomed to serve the king as wise men. They stood on their convictions, submitted to the authorities over them, and trusted the Sovereign God to prosper them. The name of the Lord and His honor before these pagan rulers are clearly at stake in this historical context.

Andrew Hill: This introductory statement reveals the unifying theme for the whole book: **God's sovereign rule of human history**. God's judgment of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah was not capricious or arbitrary. The threat of divine punishment, including exile from the land of the Abrahamic promise, was embedded in the blessings and curses of the Mosaic covenant (cf. **Lev 18:24–30; 26; Dt 28**). Owing to God's covenantal faithfulness, he was extremely patient and longsuffering with his people Israel, warning them through his prophets over centuries of the dire consequences of habitual covenantal disobedience (cf. **Ne 9:29–32**). Daniel was not oblivious to all this, as attested by his prayer for his people (**Da 9:4–11**). . .

Elements of Daniel's "**theology of exile**" developed in later sections of the commentary include: the value of prayer for Hebrews in the Diaspora, the role obedience and faithfulness to God play in the success of the Hebrews in the Diaspora, and insights into

the nature and character of divine justice and human suffering in the light of the persecution experienced by Israel during and after the Babylonian exile.

Iain Duguid: To live faithfully in exile, we first need to know **God's faithfulness**. This is not altogether as comforting a truth as you might imagine, since the first aspect of God's faithfulness that we see in this chapter is God's faithfulness in judgment. Judah's exile from the land in Daniel's time was not merely an accident of fate or the tragic result of the expansionist policies of imperial Babylon in the late seventh century B.C. As **Daniel 1:2** makes clear, the exile came upon Judah because the Lord handed King Jehoiakim over to the power of Nebuchadnezzar. God gave his people into the hand of their enemies. . .

Yet the recognition that their fate came from the hand of God as a faithful act of judgment was itself an encouragement to the exiles. Their future was not controlled by Babylon or its gods, but by the Lord, the God of heaven (**Dan. 2:19**). The one who had sent them into exile had also promised to be with them there, and ultimately to restore them from exile after a time of judgment. . .

This is an important point. During its hardest moments, life often seems out of control. Our fate may sometimes seem to lie in the hands of hostile people, or in the outworking of impersonal forces of one kind or another. Yet the reality is that our every experience in this world, from the apparently coincidental at one end of the spectrum, to the determined acts of wicked men and women on the other, lies under the control of our sovereign God. The sparrow does not fall to the ground without his permission (**Matt. 10:29**), which demonstrates that even the most trivial of events are within his view.

I. (:3) YOUNG MEN OF POTENTIAL

"*Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles,*"

A. Their Nature -- young men of the royal family
We have been born into the King's family and make partakers of the divine nature; given all that pertains to life and godliness; a high calling

B. Their Advantages -- the best environment and training
such men would have a certain bearing (dignity, poise, etc.)

C. Their Age -- the timing was right to develop these men for long term positions of leadership

Paul Lederach: The new king of Babylon has decided to make good use of his newly imported captives. The writer relates Nebuchadnezzar's conversation with Ashpenaz, his palace master (Heb.: *rab saris*; NIV*: chief of his court officials*). This Hebrew term serves as a proper noun in **2 Kings 18:17** and **Jeremiah 39:3, 13**. Ashpenaz is a

confidant of the king. As such, he would not necessarily be castrated (cf. RSV: *chief eunuch*).

II. (:4a) YOUNG MEN OF PROVEN WORTH

These were young men, but not untested. They had demonstrated excellence according to their appropriate level of maturity:

A. Physical Excellence
(in the case of spiritual leadership the emphasis would be on spiritual character)

1. Negative Perspective -- no apparent defects
(Do we have any apparent weaknesses we should be correcting?)
"*youths in whom was no defect,*"

2. Positive Perspective -- attractive; much to commend themselves
(Does our character adorn the gospel and attract others to Christ?)
"*who were good-looking,*"

B. Intellectual Excellence

"*showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom,*
endowed with understanding, and discerning knowledge,"

1. Aptitude for learning (general statement)
teachable spirit; keen mind; diversified aptitude

2. Retention and Recall of Previous Learning

3. Ability to Assimilate New Teaching
good discernment, disciplined mind, ability to correlate the unknown to the known

C. Summary of Overall Ability –

"*and who had ability for serving in the king's court*"

Whatever it took they had the aptitude for serving in this most demanding position

III. (:4b-5) YOUNG MEN OF PREPARATION

Proper training for service

A. The Proper Teacher -- Ashpenaz, chief of the king's court officials
(many people today get their training from the wrong men)

B. The Appropriate Course of Study

"*and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.*"

Paul Lederach: The youths selected by Ashpenaz will study the omens, incantations, hymns, prayers, rituals, myths and legends, formulas, and mathematics of the Chaldeans, the experts in astrology and magic.

C. The Provision of Material Needs

"*And the king appointed for them a daily ration*
from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank,"

Caution: don't be defiled in this area

D. The Prescribed Period of Training (goal-oriented training)

"*and appointed that they should be educated three years,*
at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service."

Iain Duguid: This provides us with a picture of the world's strategy of **spiritual reprograming**. At its most effective, it consists of a subtle combination of threat and promise, of enforcement and encouragement. Those who are totally recalcitrant may be sent to prison camps or gulags if necessary, but the majority of the population are far more easily assimilated if they are well fed and provided for. After all, more flies are caught with honey than with vinegar. The fundamental goal of the whole procedure, though, was in one way or another to obliterate all memory of Israel and Israel's God from the lips and the minds of these young men, and to instill into them a sense of total dependence on Nebuchadnezzar for all of the good things in life. . .

As far as possible these young men sought to work within the system in which they had been placed, being good citizens of Babylon as well as of heaven. They didn't kick against the challenging providence of God, but rather accepted it as their present calling, with all of its trials, pains, and limitations. This reminds us that our calling is not to form Christian ghettoes that are isolated from the world around us. On the contrary, we should be active in pursuing the common good of the community in which God has placed us, whatever challenges may face us.

Tremper Longman III: We might well ask why Nebuchadnezzar would bother with the exiled youth. To answer this question we need to remember that at this time Nebuchadnezzar was trying to control Judah without actually taking it over. He has placed his puppet, Zedekiah, on the throne. His purpose with Daniel and the others was to train them in Babylonian ways for political and propaganda purposes. These members of the elite classes would become enamored with Babylonian ways and customs and either return to positions of influence at home or stay in Babylon in important positions, perhaps even serving as quasi-hostages. We can see analogies at other times in ancient Near Eastern history.

IV. (:6-7) YOUNG MEN OF PROVIDENTIAL PURPOSE

> "*Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 7 Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach, and to Azariah Abed-nego.*"

Andrew Hill: All four bore theophoric names (**v.6**) associating them with the God of the Israelites: "*Daniel*" ("*God is my judge*"), "*Hananiah*" ("*Yah[weh] has been gracious*"), "*Mishael*" ("*Who is/what is God*?"), and "*Azariah*" ("*Yah[weh] has helped*").

they were assigned new names as part of the total program to Babylonionize them

Iain Duguid: At the same time the four friends accepted the will of God for their lives and served the Babylonian community, they also inwardly resisted the assimilation process of the Babylonian empire in a number of specific ways. In the first place, they resisted the total renaming program of the Babylonians. They didn't refuse to answer to their Babylonian names, to be sure, but they did maintain their Jewish names (and identities) as well. Daniel did not become Belteshazzar, even though he answered to that name, nor did Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah become Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They preserved their Hebrew names amongst themselves as a marker of who they really were (see **1:11, 19; 2:17**); they lived with dual names as a reminder of their **dual identities**, and more fundamentally as a reminder of the true nature of their God. How can we learn from them and maintain our dual identity as citizens of two kingdoms? The four young men also preserved biblical knowledge and perspectives in the midst of a thoroughly pagan educational system. This is a challenge that increasingly faces families in our community as well.

Paul Lederach: In order to complete the break with their past, to show that they are under new authority (cf. **Gen. 2:20**), and perhaps also for the sake of convenience (cf. **41:45**), Asphenaz changes the names of the youths. He takes away their names that refer to the God of the Israelites (with *el* or *yah*) and instead gives names which refer to Babylonian deities:

- Daniel (*God has judged*) becomes Belteshazzar (*Bel guard his life*).
- Hananiah (*Yahweh has been gracious*) becomes Shadrach (Saduraku: *I am fearful of god*).
- Mishael (*who is what God is*) becomes Meshach (Mesaku: *I am of little account*).
- Azariah (*Yahweh has helped*) receives an Aramaic name Abednego (a play on the name of a god, Nabu: *servant of the shining one*).

V. (:8-16) YOUNG MEN OF PURITY

Refusal to compromise convictions –

This section provides a good example of what Bill Gothard talks about regarding the

proper procedure for proposing a creative alternative to still fulfill the intention of your authority figure without compromising your purity)

A. (:8) Sanctified Determination of Daniel (acting as a spokesman for the others)
"*But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.*"

Iain Duguid: The issue here was not simply that the Babylonian food was not kosher—that is, prepared according to the Jewish dietary laws. Nor was the issue that the meat and wine had first been offered to Babylonian idols, for that would have been the case with the vegetables as well. If there had been something intrinsically evil about the Babylonian food, then Daniel would have had to abstain permanently from royal meat and wine, which does not seem to have been the case (see **Dan. 10:3**). The key to understanding why the four young men abstained from the royal food and wine is noticing that instead **they chose to eat only those things that grow naturally**—grains and vegetables—and to drink only naturally occurring water (**1:12**). This suggests that the goal of this simple lifestyle was to be constantly reminded of their dependence upon their creator God for their food, not King Nebuchadnezzar. Dependence on Nebuchadnezzar's rich food would have been defiling because it would have repeated in their own lives the sin of King Hezekiah that brought this judgment upon God's people in the first place (see **2 Kings 20:17**).

Tremper Longman III: The diet of vegetables was a **temporary regimen**, as we learn from later texts that imply that Daniel at least enjoyed rich foods later in life. Its purpose was to keep the four pious Judeans from believing that their physical appearance (and by consequence, perhaps, their intellectual gifts) were the gift of the Babylonian culture.

Paul Lederach: Hence, for Daniel to eat the king's food is to accept his protection and in turn to give him total allegiance (**Ps. 23:5**). It implies a covenant of unreserved loyalty and obedience. Daniel and his companions will serve Nebuchadnezzar but not give him absolute loyalty. This can be given only to their God! Daniel and his companions will accept much of Babylonian culture and participate in Babylonian life (cf. **Jer. 29:1-9**), but they will reject giving Nebuchadnezzar the allegiance symbolized in eating his food and drinking his wine. To accept royal rations would compromise their faith in a way the other practices do not. For them, faithfulness means insisting on primary allegiance to their God. They draw the line at some point. They avoid being fully assimilated and resist total conformity. In a sense, they are citizens of two worlds. They accept involvement in the Babylonian world, but they will not surrender loyalty to their God, which includes keeping God's covenant and any dietary rules in force. Therefore, Daniel requests that Ashpenaz allow the four to eat other food.

B. (:9) Special Favor Granted by the Lord
"*Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials,*"

(Note: Daniel had already established a good relationship with this official)

C. (:10) Sincere Fear of the Commander in Charge of Daniel and His Friends

"*and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, 'I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king.*'"

D. (:11-14) Specific Proposal to the Overseer

"*But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, 12 'Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance be observed in your presence, and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see.' 14 So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days.*"

Andrew Hill: The question of conformity to the surrounding culture was of paramount concern for the Diaspora Hebrews. To what degree, if any, should the displaced Israelites make accommodation to the surrounding dominant culture? What place was there for the Hebrew distinctives of religious monotheism and ethical absolutism based on the law of Moses in the religious pluralism and moral relativism of the Gentile superpowers? Rather than react in open defiance of the king's decree, Daniel and his friends arranged a compromise with Ashpenaz and his appointed guardian (**vv.10–14**). The alternative to eating the king's food was a "rations test," with the Hebrew captives to be fed a diet of vegetables and water (**v.12**), against the control group of those young men eating the royal provisions (**v.13**).

E. (:15-16) Successful Results of the Test

"*And at the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. 16 So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables.*"

VI. (:17-21) YOUNG MEN OF PROSPERITY (:17-21)

A. (:17) Prospered with Special Wisdom and Insight

"*And as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams.*"

Tremper Longman III: The effect of the theme of "*God's giving*" throughout the chapter is to press home who is really in control of the events of Daniel's life.

Iain Duguid: If the Lord could keep these young men faithful to him in their situation, then he is surely able to keep us faithful to him in our much lesser trials and difficulties. No matter how overwhelming our situation may seem, God is able to keep us through it. It is his work from beginning to end, and he will do it.

B. (:18-20) Prospered with Responsible Opportunities for Service

> "*Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 And the king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service. 20 And as for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm.*"

Paul Lederach: After identifying the superior abilities of the four, Nebuchadnezzar gives them positions of special responsibility: they were stationed in the king's court (**1:19**). In addition he continues his interview to check the breadth and depth of their comprehension of Babylonian wisdom and understanding. Then Nebuchadnezzar comes to a startling conclusion. These four are ten times more competent than all the magicians and enchanters in the kingdom! (**1:20**).

C. (:21) Prospered with Peace and Security

> "*And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.*"

Andrew Hill: In reality, Daniel's **longevity** testified both to God's sovereignty over the nations and his faithfulness to his people Israel. Even as Daniel outlasted the kings of the Babylonian Empire, so God's people were sustained in captivity and eventually permitted to return to their homeland of covenantal promise (**2Ch 36:22–23; Ezr 1:1–4**). Likewise, the presence of the Israelite named Daniel in the royal court of seven Babylonian monarchs and the first king of Persia was a tangible reminder that God is the one who sets up kings and deposes them (**Da 2:21**).

* * * * * * * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Consider how much change these young men were forced to experience. Think of the insecurity of being in a foreign land with a different culture and facing the pressure of conformity. What type of convictions to we have to anchor our soul under such forms of pressure?

2) What are our standards for purity? Where do we draw the line for defilement? Do we constantly get sucked closer and closer to the world's standards?

3) Note how respectful Daniel was in his appeal to authority. What steps did he take to avoid being unduly confrontational? Where did he draw the line in terms of not being willing to compromise? How thoughtful and careful are we in what we say in controversial situations?

4) Consider how amazing it was that these foreigners should rise to such positions of prominence. What does that teach you about God's providential power to raise up those whom He chooses to favor?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Derrick Strickland: **A NON-NEGOTIABLE FAITH**
INTRODUCTION: Sometimes our faith can become an inconvenience. It will place us in inconvenient situation.

I. A NON-NEGOTIABLE FAITH MEANS THAT WE HAVE ESTABLISHED NON-NEGOTIABLES IN OUR LIVES.

II. A NON-NEGOTIABLE FAITH NEED NOT BE CONFRONTATIONAL.

III. A NON-NEGOTIABLE FAITH MEANS EMBRACING
THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR CONVICTIONS.

Darrel Davis: We are going to look at three principles that will help us to live in this world without becoming like this world:

I. SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO GO AGAINST THE FLOW (**v. 8**)

II. SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE STAND FOR WHAT'S RIGHT (**v. 8**)

III. SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO EXERCISE YOUR FAITH (**v. 12-13**)

Conclusion: Do you have what it takes to live in this world without compromising?

Mike Spain: **The Pursuit of Excellence**
1. The pursuit of excellence will most always seem foreign to those on the OUTSIDE looking IN! (See **Dan. 1:10** and **3:14**)

2. Excellence will never ever COMPROMISE! (See **Dan. 1:8** and **3:17-18**)

3. Excellence may be COSTLY! (See **Dan. 3:19-20**)

4. Excellence will PAY off in the long run! (See **Dan. 1:15, 18-19** and **3:25, 28-29**)

Stedman: A second precaution God has taken in Daniel, and even more especially in the book of Revelation, is that he doesn't introduce the prophetic section first, but brings us through six chapters into an understanding of the moral character he requires of the reader before the prophetic program can begin to make sense. In other words, you can't understand the last section of Daniel unless you have lived through and understood what is involved in the first six chapters. There is no way to understand what the prophetic program means unless you first grasp the moral lessons of the first part of the book. There is no way to cheat on this. You can't just read it through, and then turn to the prophetic program and hope to understand. You will find that you get nothing out of it. You really have to carefully analyze these initial chapters, think them through, begin to walk accordingly, and experience them, before the prophetic program comes to life. That is the glory of God's book. You can't understand it with just the intellect. . .

The first six chapters are for you if you are a teenager going to school where you are surrounded constantly by those who seem to have no interest in what God is like, or in the things of God. Daniel and his friends were themselves teenagers when they were first taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar and carried off to the land of Babylon. As they began their career of faith, they did so with a total lack of understanding of life and with all the insecurity of a teenager in a hostile environment. The book records in these first six chapters the pressure they underwent as they stood for their faith in the midst of these difficult surroundings.

Peter Wallace: **Eating and Learning – How to Live as a Christian in a Foreign Land**

Every generation thinks that it is worse now than it has ever been. Lamentations was written so that each generation can weep and wail over their misery. Every generation also thinks that it is so bad now that this must be the end! Daniel was written so that each generation can see that it may not be time yet! Lamentations and Daniel are very different books – but they share at least one thing in common. In our Bibles they are placed among the prophets – while the Hebrew Bible placed them among the writings. We saw that the book of Lamentations does not contain much that would be called "prophecy" – either in terms of predicting or in terms of preaching.

Daniel also does not read like one of the prophets. Sure, there are dreams and visions – but those are actually rather rare among the prophets. Daniel fits better in the genre of "apocalyptic" – something that you find at the end of Ezekiel, or in the book of Revelation. But in spite of some of the strange features of the book, Daniel is not a difficult book to understand. The point of the book is quite obvious. Sinclair Ferguson puts it well: "The heart of the book's message is…the good news of the kingdom of God. Nations and empires, thrones and dominions will rise and fall, but the city of God will endure. His kingdom will last forever, and the gates of hell shall not withstand it. The stone cut without hands will break into pieces the idols of man's creation and ultimately grow into a mountain that will fill the whole earth…. The Christian who sees and believes this will soon learn how to sing the Lord's song in whatever foreign land He places us in."

The Book of Daniel has a very clear and coherent structure. . . What you are looking at is a double chiasm! At the center of the book is the central theme of city of God. **Chapters 1, 9, and 12** are at the center of the story. But then **chapters 2-7** form a clear chiasm around **chapter 1**. **Chapters 2 and 7** deal with the four kingdoms (the four beasts). **Chapters 3 and 6** deal with the particular trials of Daniel and his friends (the Fiery Furnace and the Lions' Den) – moments when Daniel and his friends faced persecution and death for the sake of their faith. **Chapters 4 and 5** then deal with the trials of the Kings of Babylon – how Nebuchadnezzar passed the test – but Belshazzar did not.

The second half of the book then expounds the themes of **chapters 2 and 7** – what did Nebuchadnezzar's dream really mean? **Chapter 8** connects with **7** (the chiasm is doubling back on itself!), even talking about how the beasts could not defeat the ram. And **chapters 10-11** expound Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the four kingdoms. But at the center of the second half of the book is **chapter 9** – Daniel's Prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem. And the book concludes with God's promise of that restoration in **chapter 12**. . .

The first part of Daniel (**chapters 1-6**) takes the form of a third person narrative – stories about Daniel and his friends. The second part of Daniel (**chapters 7-12**) takes the form of first person description of dreams and visions. But the division into parts is not so simple! After all, the book of Daniel is written in two different languages. **Chapter 1** and then **chapters 8-12** are written in Hebrew (like the rest of the OT). But **chapters 2-7** are written in Aramaic – the language of politics and diplomacy in the ancient world. In other words, most of the stories about Daniel and his friends (while they were living in Babylon and Persia) are written in the language of the Babylonian court. But also Daniel's first vision is written in that language. But then in **chapter 8**, it switches back to Hebrew.

While this switch is doing many things – the one thing that I want to highlight here is that the change in language has the effect of uniting the book across the "stories" and "visions." Of course, the content of the visions also unites the book. Nebuchadnezzar's vision in **chapter 2** will continue to be expounded.

But for tonight, we will focus just on how **chapter 1** sets the stage in Hebrew. **Chapter 1** is structured by three things that the Lord gave. In **verse 2**, the Lord gave Jehoiakim in Nebuchadnezzar's hand. In **verse 9**, God gave Daniel favor in the chief eunuch's sight. And in **verse 17**, God gave Daniel and his friends learning and skill.

1. "The Lord Gave Jehoiakim into His Hand" – Hostages in a Foreign Land (1-7)

Verse 1 takes us back to the time of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah. There are three deportations of people from Judah to Babylon. The first is this one – the third year of Jehoiakim (605 BC). The second was in 597 – when Ezekiel was taken into captivity. The third was after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

In the book of Kings the first deportation is only referred to briefly – In **2 Kings 24:1**, we are told that in Jehoiakim's days, "*Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and*

Jehoiakim became his servant three years." It was common in those days for hostages to be given – as pledges of good behavior – so when it says that "Jehoiakim became his servant" – it would make sense that various hostages would be taken – youths from the royal family and from the nobility.

In **Isaiah 39**, back in the days of King Hezekiah (around the year 700 B.C.), Hezekiah had welcomed envoys from Babylon (back when Babylon was just a little upstart city – challenging great might of Assyria) – and Hezekiah showed them all his storehouses (the implication being that Jerusalem had the resources to assist Babylon against Assyria!). But the prophet Isaiah had chided Hezekiah for this, saying: "*Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in hour house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. 4 Nothing shall be left, says the LORD. And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.*" (**Is 39:6-7**) Now that day has come. But I want you to pay attention to how the book of Daniel tells this story:

a. Two Kings, Two Cities, Two Temples, Two Gods (**v1-2**)

Daniel has a strong focus on liturgy and on matters related to worship and the temple. The ceremonial laws play a key role here in **chapter 1** (on remaining clean) and throughout the book of Daniel. You see it already in **verse 2** with the vessels of the house of God being placed in the treasury of Nebuchadnezzar's god.

In **verses 1-2** there are two kings, two cities, two temples, and two gods. Everything is set up in parallel: Jehoiakim and Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem and Babylon, the house of God and the house of his god. The only disjunction is found in that while Adonai is named in **verse 2**, the other god is not named at all. It is simply "*his god*." The gods of Babylon will never be named in the book of Daniel. You can see them everywhere in the background – but Daniel never "honors" them by naming them! In the eyes of the nations, Marduk has triumphed over Yahweh – as the vessels from Yahweh's temple are placed in Marduk's temple. But this is the way that Yahweh gains the victory over the nations! Captivity and exile are the way to glory! That was true in the book of Samuel, when the ark of the covenant was taken into the temple of Dagon. And it will be true in the gospels, when Jesus will be crucified by the Romans.

The only way to glory is the way of the cross. The incarnation – where the Word became flesh – the humiliation of the Son of God – is a theme that runs throughout the whole of the Scriptures! And yet the chief actor in **chapter 1** (and throughout Daniel) remains the Lord God of Israel. God is the one who gave Jehoiakim into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. God is the one who gave Daniel favor in the sight of the chief eunuch. God is the one who gave Daniel and his friends wisdom and skill. Here there is no lament over Jerusalem (that will come in **Daniel 9**). Here the focus is on how God works all things together for good for those who love him – for those who are called according to his purpose. Undoubtedly being carried away as hostages to Babylon was a frightening experience! (And that's why we have the book of Lamentations!) But you cannot live forever in Lamentations! God calls you to live for him in the midst of a foreign culture.

And we see this particularly in **verses 3-5**:

b. Cult and Culture (**v3-5**)

Nebuchadnezzar wants these Israelite youths to understand and embrace Chaldean culture. We often think of "culture" as something neutral – but it is important to understand that the idea of culture is rooted in the idea of cultus – worship. Culture is always shaped and formed by cult – by worship practices. The book of Daniel will be very helpful for teaching us how to engage with modern culture while remaining faithful to our God.

Here, in **verse 3**, Nebuchadnezzar commands Ashpenaz (his chief eunuch) to choose some of the people of Israel and train them in Babylonian culture. As one commentator puts it, "They are to have status, looks, brains, and 'presence.'" (Davis, 30) At least, that's the way the Babylonians would put it. But if you pay attention to the language used, these are to be "*youths without blemish*" – language that reminds us of the characteristics of the priests in Leviticus. They are also to be of "*good appearance*" – language that was used of David in **1 Samuel 16 and 17**. They are also to be "*skillful in all wisdom*" – language that is also used of David four times in **1 Samuel 18**, and frequently of Solomon. Indeed, all of this language is used regularly of David and Solomon.

In other words, while Nebuchadnezzar is just thinking about status, looks, brains, and presence, the book of Daniel is using language to show us that these young men are priestly and kingly in their qualities. In this way Daniel and his friends are not representative of "ordinary Israelites." They are the cream of the crop – they prefigure our Lord Jesus Christ – as they endure humiliation and testing on behalf of the people of God. And they are set the task of studying "the literature and language of the Chaldeans." This would mean learning Akkadian and Aramaic – and studying theology, history, astronomy, mathematics, and medicine. Babylon had been a center of learning and writing for more than a thousand years so they would have access to the finest libraries in the ancient world! Much of Babylonian learning blended religious and scientific observation. Their astronomers studied the heavens religiously! They believed that the movements of the heavenly bodies affected things on earth, and one of the most common ways that people had access to this heavenly information was through dreams. So Daniel and his friends would have learned all of this – and more! And while our text is written from as Israelite standpoint – in Hebrew – it is worth pointing out that from the Babylonian standpoint, there is a certain generosity in bringing these poor provincials into the grand and glorious circle of Babylonian culture and wisdom!

Sure, there is a political motive: if young people from conquered nations learn to appreciate Babylonian culture and wisdom, then they may be able to "elevate" their countrymen and thus these "foreign" nations can be made a permanent part of the empire! This is a sort of cultural imperialism – Of course these benighted provincials would benefit from our superior wisdom! You see the same tendency in American imperialism in the 20th and 21st centuries. The American way of doings things may work well for America. But why do we think that it will work for other nations? The Arab spring a few years ago demonstrated very clearly that American-style democracy

did not make life better for Egyptian minorities – because the Egyptian people simply voted in an Islamist government that would make sure that there would never be another free election! America has demonstrated repeatedly that we are more like Babylon than we are like Jerusalem! We try to impose our culture through economic and political force – sometimes even military force. And further, like Babylon, we think that education will transform the hearts and minds of our enemies and persuade them of our wisdom!

c. Daniel and His Friends (**v6-7**)

But it's not just about "education." Nebuchadnezzar wants these Israelite youth to fully embrace their new world. And so among their humiliation is the stripping away of all that they had once known – even their names. Daniel (*God is my Judge*) becomes Belteshazzar (*O Lady protect the King*) Hananiah (*Yahweh is gracious*) becomes Shadrach (*command of Aku – the moon god*) Mishael (*Who is what God is*?) becomes Meshach (*Who is like Aku*?) Azariah (*Yahweh is a helper*) becomes Abednego (*servant of Nebo – the shining one*). In other words, all of them had been named with the name of God – and now they must be called by the names of other gods!

We struggle today with the question of how to use gendered pronouns. If a man says, "call me a woman" – what do you do? Well, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah had a worse problem: it wasn't merely "call me something I'm not" – they themselves were renamed with the names of foreign gods. From now on your name is not Azariah (*Yahweh is a helper*). Your name is Abednego (*Servant of Nebo*). It is instructive to us to then watch how Daniel and his friends respond to this situation. They accept their new names. This is what they will be called. They embrace this new education – and do very well in their examinations! In Hebrew, the verbs in **verse 7** are the same as the first verb in **verse 8**. The chief eunuch "set" the names of Daniel and his friends. Now Daniel sets himself to not defile himself with the king's food. In Hebrew, it is very clear that the chief eunuch is setting one standard – and now Daniel is setting another! Notice where they draw the line:

2. "God Gave Daniel Favor" – Why Eating Food Sacrificed to Idols Is Worse than Pagan Learning (8-16)

a. The Problem of Defilement (**v8**)

Why is this the issue for Daniel? Pagan learning is not a problem. After all, my God made the heavens and the earth – therefore, everything that I am studying belongs to God. All truth is God's truth. Being called by a pagan name may be frustrating – but I am not sinning by answering to that name. I am simply acknowledging that things are not the way they should be right now!! But eating the king's food – drinking the king's wine – that is a different matter! All the meat in the Babylonian court has been sacrificed to the Babylonian gods. All the wine has been offered in a drink offering to the gods of Babylon. To eat the king's meat and drink the king's wine is to partake of the covenant meal with Marduk. Now, some have argued that even the vegetables would have been offered to Marduk. That may be. But the point here is not a rigid observance of every detail of Levitical law. Rather, the point is that Daniel is choosing

to draw the line at a point where it is possible to find accommodation. And at a point of daily practice – where the rhythms and patterns of daily life will function to remind him and his friends that while they are servants of the King of Babylon, they still belong more to the Lord God of Israel!

Think about it! If they refuse their new names, they will likely be killed – and furthermore, God never said anything about names! But what they eat? In refusing the King's meat and wine Daniel and his friends are quietly declaring their adherence to the LORD God of Israel. If you go back and read the food laws in Leviticus – you will be struck by the repetitions of the phrase, "*I am the LORD your God*." Observing the food laws are one of the basic ways that Israelites maintain their distinctive identity. The basic point is that Daniel does not want to be squeezed into the mold of Babylon. He cannot guarantee that everything he eats will be kosher! But by refusing the meat and wine of the king, he is preserving his distinctive identity as belonging to GOD – not to Nebuchadnezzar.

We are not obligated by the food laws of the OT – but Paul will speak of the importance of not eating meat sacrificed to idols – because we should not partake of the table of demons! It's not that the meat itself is defiled – rather, it is the significance of the meal. If eating this meal identifies you with Babylon – with the gods of the nations – with the powers of this age – then don't eat the meal! This is why fasting is a useful Christian discipline. When we fast, we are saying that we belong God. Our culture prizes food. We have turned our ordinary meals into banquets! So Daniel makes the request to Ashpenaz – the chief eunuch. It's important for us to also pay attention to the manner in which Daniel makes the request. He does not stage a public protest. A public protest would shame the chief eunuch – and thus would almost certainly not end well for Daniel! You see Daniel's wisdom clearly in how he goes privately to the chief eunuch, thereby enabling the back-and-forth of a quiet conversation.

And so **verse 9** tells us that:

b. The Compassion of the Steward (**v9-16**)

In other words, I would like to do what you ask – but not at the risk of my life! Now, that may not sound like "favor and compassion" from Ashpenaz! It sounds like he is saying "no." But that's because we are modern Midwestern Americans! We like people who say exactly what they are thinking! But anyone from a culture that is used to more indirect speech would immediately see an opening in this "NO!" namely: "why should he see that you were in worse condition…" In other words, Ashpenaz says to Daniel, "So long as you guys look good – and make me look good – I don't care what you do!"

That's why Daniel feels perfectly comfortable going to the steward appointed by Ashpenaz: **(:11-16**) - "Vegetables" would include fruits and grains – basically all the produce of the ground. I like how one commentator puts this: "Daniel and the three are feeling their way forward in a moment without a spiritual map. The narrative they knew of divine faithfulness in history has come to an end, and all they can do is improvise acts of faithfulness in a land where they cannot see the old monuments." (Sumner, 126)

But I want you to see the pattern here: The turning point in **chapter 1** comes when Daniel takes a stand. As long as Daniel and his friends are "going with the flow" of Babylonian culture, there will be no story to tell. It is only at the point of resistance – where Daniel and his friends determine to live a faithful life in the middle of Babylonian culture – only there do you see the glory of God revealed!

And the result is seen in **verse 17**

3. "God Gave Them Learning and Skill" – Wisdom and Pagan Learning (17-21)

And the result is that God gave these youths learning and skill in all literature and wisdom. Daniel alone is given understanding in all visions and dreams. But the other three – Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah – are included as being "*ten times better*" in their wisdom and understanding "*than all the magicians and enchanters*" of Babylon.

Notice the quiet reversal of **verses 1-2**. In **verses 1-2**, God gave Jerusalem over to Babylon Now God gives the youths of Jerusalem high standing in Babylon. Indeed, over the coming chapters we will see these youths come to play a key role in the governing of Babylon! But when you watch how they rule – they rule with wisdom and grace. They do not seek to "subvert" Babylon. They seek the peace – the welfare – of the city where they have been called. They love their enemies and do good to those who persecute them.

Verse 21 then tells us: *And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.* The first year of King Cyrus was the year 539 B.C. That's 66 years after Daniel was taken captive from Jerusalem. By 539, Daniel would have been at least 80 years old. Kingdoms rise. Kingdoms fall. But God's people endure amidst the wrack and ruin of empires. In Dale Ralph Davis's memorable way of saying it: "So in verse 21 Babylon, the hairy-chested macho brute of the world, has dropped with a thud into the mausoleum of history, while fragile Daniel, servant of the Most High God, is still on his feet." The servants of God will outlast the empires of this age! "*The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life.*" (**Rev. 3:5**)

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **The Sovereignty of God in the Government of Men**
Introduction: Background material for studying Daniel

I. Authenticity of the Book
The book of Daniel is attacked more than the book of Genesis in the Bible? Why is that so? Well, because this book of Daniel is one of the greatest evidences in the Bible of the sovereignty of God and of the Bible being the Word of God. Fulfilled prophecy proves that God is God, that he reigns over all the affairs of men, and that the Bible is indeed the Word of God.

A. Written after the fact

Critics say all it wasn't written in the sixth century right after the Babylonian captivity, like we believe the traditional view. They say no, it was written in the second century after these things had already come.

B. Daniel not a real person
Ezekiel and Jesus both mention Daniel as a real person.

C. Historical inaccuracies
We find the more studies that are done, the more archaeological discoveries that are made in the Holy Land, the more we see that the Bible is true. that the Bible is real, but let me tell you this. No amount of evidence is going to convict someone who does not want to believe.

II. Author of the Book = Daniel

Daniel was carried away in the captivity when he was 15 years old when Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem. In fact, there were three invasions. One at 605, one at 597, and one at 585. Three times the Babylonians came into the city of Jerusalem and they carried away captives. Daniel was carried away the first deportation. He was taken into a foreign land. He was perhaps a teenager, fifteen years old.

Daniel was a man of prosperity, but also Daniel was a man of integrity. Now, the name Daniel means *God is my judge*. And you might want to say it like this. Daniel lives up to his name. You see, if you really believe that God is your judge, that's really going to change the way you live, will it not? I mean, if you really believe that God is watching you. and that he is judging everything you do and he will reward you for doing right and he will punish you for doing wrong. That will change the way you live. You might say that Daniel lived up to his name. God is my judge. But also, I see as I read the book of Daniel, Daniel was a man of humility. He was a man of humility. That is, he was constantly pointing to God.

III. Arrangement of the Book

Chapters one through six are biographical. It's all about Daniel and then chapter seven through twelve are prophetical. It's all about the future. The first section we see Daniel's victories and the second section we see Daniel's visions and the first section is written in the third person. In the second section, it's written in the first person. So you might want to say the first part is talking about practical lessons of living by faith. And the second part is prophetic lessons about looking into the future. Now, the first part was written in Aramaic, one of the few books in the Bible. Actually, there's two this one in Ezra that have Aramaic in it and then the second part was written in Hebrew.

IV. Aim of the Book

What is the thing that binds it together? It's the thing I introduced to you. It is the sovereignty of God who rules over all. We see that all through this book. We see the sovereignty of God in Daniel's personal life, who brought about all the events in his personal life. We see the sovereignty of God in the governments and kingdoms of men in the second half of the book.

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **The Death of a Nation (1:1-2)**
Introduction: Arnold Toynbee, speaks of 19 civilizations that have existed since man began to form governments. Of the nineteen, only five are alive, or still remain, and ours is one of the five. Historians like Arnold Toynbee has given us plenty of information that speak about the cycle of history, the rise and fall of nation after nation. It is inevitable in human society, decay happens when a nation forgets God. And I believe that we're seeing the corruption and decay of our own nation.

The story opens with Daniel witnessing the fall of Judah and Israel.

I. The Horrible Reality of God's Judgment
In the Book of Lamentations, Jeremiah describes some of the horror.

II. The Historical Reasons for God's Judgment
A. Because they totally rejected God – Jer. 2:1, 13

B. Because they committed gross idolatry – Jer. 2:26
I think the idols, the gods of America today are pleasure and position and prestige and materialism and having things and money.

C. Because of the slaughter of the innocent – Jer. 32:35
Ezek. 16:21; 2 Kings 24
Cf. atrocities of abortion today

D. A total disregard for God's Word – Jer. 2:8
They had no concern about keeping the law of God. **Jer. 7:23**

E. They depended on other nations instead of turning to God – Jer. 2:18

F. They failed to learn from history – Jer. 3:6

G. They didn't listen to the warnings of the prophets

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **Resolved (1:3-21)**
Introduction: Definition: to come to a definite or earnest decision about determining to do something. A resolution is something that you stick with. It's something that you allow to determine how you live your life.

Perhaps the most famous set of resolutions in the history of the modern church was made by a man by the name of Jonathan Edwards. 70 resolutions

Daniel made a firm resolution about living to the glory of God. And it was in the midst of a crooked and perverse and pagan society that he made this steely resolution. And what I want us to see in this passage, in this story, in four acts, and how he lived for the glory of God, he lived a life resolved to that purpose.

1. Daniel's Crisis

A. It was a national crisis

Daniel is taken away into captivity as a teenager. God brought the nation of Babylon to power for that very purpose of paddling his people, of punishing his people, and Nebuchadnezzar was the rod. And so this is a national crisis. They totally rejected God. The nation of Judah, they committed gross immorality. They slaughtered the innocent. They totally disregarded God's word. And really, sometimes you can determine the nation by looking at a key leader. If you look in Jeremiah 36, Jehoiakim, who is the king, there's a picture of him there just cutting up the scripture, cutting up the word of God and casting it into the fire. That picture there really summarize the whole heart and attitude of the people of Judah. They had no regard for God's word whatsoever, and they were punished for it. They were fascinated with idolatry, and God said, OK, you like idols. I'll take you to the place where idolatry began. This is the center of false worship. This is the center of idolatry.

B. It was an intellectual crisis

Nebuchadnezzar wanted young boys of a teachable age. He wanted young men willing and able to learn new things. Why? Because he was going to re-educate them. He was going to brainwash them into the Babylonian culture and philosophy.

C. It was a spiritual crisis

They ate what the king ate.

- Did not conform to the requirements of Mosaic Law
- Meat and wine had been offered sacrificially to the Babylonian gods

D. It was a personal crisis

Nebuchadnezzar is conforming them to that culture. And so he changed their names. These new names are all designed to make them forget their old names their old life their old identity and to embrace the new.

2. Daniel's Conviction

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself

A person who is resolved lives by a set of convictions that really make the decision for him. A conviction is a Bible based belief or duty that God requires of me. **Ps. 119:115**

If you do not live by conviction, Then you'll go by whatever circumstance dictates or whatever is convenient at the time, and you'll just go with the flow of the world. If you're a Christian and you're living in a pagan world, you have to learn to swim upstream. We got to swim upstream. And so if I ever write an autobiography, I'm going to title it *Swimming Upstream*.

Daniel made a decision. It was an individual decision. It was an insightful decision. This was a matter of conviction. It wasn't a matter of preference. A preference is a matter of personal taste based on past experience. Yielding your preferences is courtesy. Yielding your conviction is compromise. We yield our preferences, but we never yield our convictions.

3. Daniel's Courage

It's possible for a Christian to take the right stand in the wrong way? That's possible. Daniel, he didn't do that. He came humbly. He made a request. God blesses those who are determined to obey His commandment, and He prospers those who trust in Him. It doesn't mean that we won't at times pay a price for that. But ultimately God will bless

Conclusion: What's the great lesson of this whole story? Godly resolve brings godly reward.

TEXT: Daniel 2:1-49

TITLE: MAN'S INABILITY VS GOD'S SUFFICIENCY

BIG IDEA:
MAN'S INABILITY REQUIRES GOD'S SUFFICIENCY –
TRUE WISDOM AND POWER COME FROM THE SOVEREIGN GOD

INTRODUCTION:

This chapter exposes man's inability (his limitations) and God's gracious sufficiency. In himself man is bankrupt in the realm of spiritual wisdom and power. We bring nothing to the table. However, the Sovereign God, the one who controls all of history, the one who possesses all wisdom and power, graciously gives wisdom and power to His servants as they need it.

Tremper Longman III: **Daniel 2** presents a second self-contained story—a story best remembered by the bizarrely constructed (at least by modern tastes) statue that dominates Nebuchadnezzar's dream. However, we must not let our curiosity concerning God's revelation of future events distract us from the main theme of the chapter: **Only God's wisdom can reveal the mysteries of life**. In other words, it is not the content of the revelation of the future that is primary; what is most important here is the fact that it is only Daniel's God that knows that future. And God's knowledge of the future is particularly important to a people in exile and under some measure of oppression, because it implies that he controls history. Once again, therefore, we are reminded of the overall theme of this book: In spite of present appearances, **God is in control**. . .

True wisdom is not the result of years of reading or even living life; rather, true wisdom is the result of a **relationship**, a relationship with the God who created and rules over the world. . . Wisdom is a relationship that produces a mindset, a way of looking at the world. Indeed, it looks at life through the eyes of Christ.

John Goldingay: Daniel is a model of Israelite wisdom (**v. 14**) and a model of Israelite piety in his prayer (**v. 18**), his vision (**v. 19**), his praise (**vv. 19–23**), his witness (**vv. 27–28**), his self-effacement (**v. 30**), and his conviction (**v. 45**). The fruit of his work is not merely rewards and promotion (**v. 48**) but obeisance and recognition of his God (**vv. 46–47**).

Norman Porteous: The second chapter fulfils the expectation aroused by the first chapter that Daniel's special endowment with wisdom and with the skill to interpret dreams will be given scope at the Babylonian court. Quite apart from the revelation regarding the course and climax of world history which the chapter is to record and which forms its kernel, it has the secondary but important aim of demonstrating the superiority of the God-given wisdom which is at Daniel's disposal to all the vaunted insight which the sages and diviners of Babylon claim to possess by the exercise of

human reason or through their control of magical techniques, and, further, of showing that in the event the world is forced to recognize this superiority.

Stephen Miller: Three primary theological truths are emphasized in this chapter.

- First, God is **sovereign** over kings and the affairs of this earth. J. Boice well comments: "If God does not control our lives—from the actions of kings and others in positions of power to the most minute circumstances—then everything in life is uncertain. We are victims of circumstances, and whatever happens will happen. Que sera, sera! But if God is sovereign, as the Bible declares him to be, and if he is our God—if the promises he makes and the actions he takes are certain of fulfillment—then we can be confident of the future and know that we will be able to live our lives in a way that will please God."
- Second, God is **omniscient**. He knows all things, including the future, and at times chooses to reveal the future to human beings.
- Third, empires will arise until the end, but the **glorious kingdom of God** will surely come, and all the wickedness of earthly regimes will cease.

I. (:1-18) MAN'S INABILITY

A. (:1-3) The Inability of Man's Power --

Picture of Nebuchadnezzar

He was frustrated. Despite all of his power he did not have the capacity for knowing and controlling the future. Therefore, despite his present success, he could not be assured of the permanency of his kingdom.

Even men of power have needs and can never be self-sufficient.

> **Zech. 4:6** -- "*Not by might nor by power (of men), but by MY Spirit says the Lord of Hosts.*"

Our work for God cannot be forced; it depends on God's timing, His purposes, His granting of favor and fruit.

1. **(:1)** Troubled Spirit of the King

> "*Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him.*"

Stephen Miller: Nebuchadnezzar recognized that this dream was important. The ancient Babylonians believed that dreams were messages from the gods; thus a right understanding of the dream was critical for their future. In this case Nebuchadnezzar apparently feared that the strange revelation contained an **ominous message** for him.

2. (:**2-3**) Turning to His Trusted Advisers for Help

> "*Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans, to tell the king his dreams. So they came in*

and stood before the king. 3 And the king said to them, 'I had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream.'"

Admission of the inability of man's power

John Goldingay: The terms are used randomly and interchangeably. The author was not referring to specific groups and consciously excluding ones that happen not to be mentioned; there was, indeed, no Babylonian group specifically concerned with interpreting dreams. The words are treated as **variant synonyms** for the **Babylonian diviners** whose role was central to Babylonian religious and political life; the author uses a number of the terms in combination to convey the impression of the various guilds, in a way that parallels the further collections of exotic foreign terms in **ch. 3**.

B. (:4-13) The Inability of Man's Wisdom --
Picture of Educated Men and Spiritual Imposters (who do not have a vital relationship with God); Picture of the class of magicians = the wise men and priests who served in the court of Nebuchadnezzar

- The Best Education is Insufficient
  Our culture tends to think education is the answer to every problem

- The Best Experience is Insufficient
  They had been offering counsel for many years

- The Failure of Man's Wisdom is Exposed in Time of Crisis

1. (:**4**) Testimony of Inability of Man's Wisdom (Redefining the Mission)
   "*Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: 'O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation.*"

   a. Opportunity was not the problem -- they were the first ones called in by the king and asked to help

   b. They had been masquerading as "*servants*" of the king, but really they were serving their own selfish interests

   c. They tried to conceal their inability by redefining their mission (decreasing the difficulty of the task)

   d. They hid behind a polite, religious façade

   e. They promised much more than they could deliver

2. (:**5-6**) Two Possible Outcomes
   a. **(:5)** Punishment
      "*The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, 'The command*

from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb, and your houses will be made a rubbish heap."'

Stephen Miller: This was no idle threat by Nebuchadnezzar, whose harsh treatment of King Zedekiah (**2 Kgs 25:7**), two Jewish rebels named Ahab and Zedekiah (not King Zedekiah; **Jer 29:22**), and Daniel's three friends (**chap. 3**) proved that he would have no qualms about carrying out this cruel threat upon his counselors. Herodotus related a similar instance in which Darius I (about one hundred years later) massacred his wise men (Magi) with the result that the group was almost annihilated. . .

Why would Nebuchadnezzar be so willing to dispose of his wise men? First, their inability to acquire the necessary information proved that their power was limited and that they were not in touch with the gods as they claimed. Second, the king probably felt that the dream foretold some terrible disaster that was going to befall him. After all, Nebuchadnezzar had seen a manlike statue destroyed, which he likely associated with himself or his empire. He may well have felt insecure about his newly acquired kingdom, and he may have considered the destruction of the statue a divine omen to him that he and his empire were doomed. Perhaps this led him to believe that someone was planning to assassinate him and take away his kingdom. With intrigue in the courts of that day common, such was a real possibility (two out of the next three Babylonian kings were assassinated). Traitors may have been in his midst planning to overthrow his government at that very moment. Since a coup usually was perpetrated by the military or the court, the king may have wondered if some of these very wise men were plotting against him. Thus he was not reluctant to rid himself of them.

b. (:**6**) Reward

"*But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation.*"

They feared a strict accountability; they were not accustomed to playing for such high stakes

3. (:**7-9**) Tactic of Stalling When Pressed for Results

"*They answered a second time and said, 'Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation.' 8 The king answered and said, 'I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm, 9 that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation.*"'

Their only recourse is to try to bargain for more time; trying to confuse the king that more time will lead to progress toward a resolution of his demands. They

support one another in their deception and falsehood.

Tremper Longman III: His reaction to the diviners' request to supply them with the content of the dream indicates that Nebuchadnezzar is testing their **integrity**. He realizes how easy it is to provide an interpretation of a symbolic dream and wants to assure himself of their authenticity by demanding that they also tell him something that only he himself knows, the actual contents of the dream.

4. (:**10-11**) Testimony of Inability of Man's Wisdom

"*The Chaldeans answered the king and said, 'There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean. 11 Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh.*'"

- No Insight from any man can satisfy this impossible demand –
  When their inability is exposed, they are forced to confess that the task is just too difficult.

- No Illumination from the gods is accessible –
  They maintain the existence of their gods and yet confess the helplessness of their gods to communicate to man. These charlatans are not channels for divine communication.

Andrew Hill: Finally the astrologers (who speak for the group throughout the scene) admit defeat. The task lies beyond the capabilities of mortals (**v.10a**); the king's answer requires revelation from the gods, and they do not cohabit with humanity (**v.11b**). Beyond this, there is no precedent for such a request from any king previous to Nebuchadnezzar—implying the king is both unrealistic and unfair (**vv.10b–11a**). This response infuriates the king, and he decrees the execution of all the wise men of Babylon (**v.12**).

5. (:**12-13**) Temper Tantrum and Execution Orders from the Frustrated King

"*Because of this the king became indignant and very furious, and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 So the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them.*"

Looks like Daniel and his friends are destined to be collateral damage because of the failure of these impotent wise men of Babylon.

Iain Duguid: Put yourself in Daniel's shoes for a moment. At first sight, this decree must have seemed proof of the monumental meaninglessness of life. Daniel and his three friends had been preserved out of the holocaust of the destruction of Judah and then miraculously protected in the king's court despite their commitment to eat only

vegetables, but now they were condemned to death along with all the other wise men of the court. Simply because the king had a sleepless night and a fit of unreasonableness, their lives were now at risk.

C. (:14-18) The Inability of Genuine Spiritual Leaders (in themselves) -- Picture of Daniel -- God's Servant in Time of Crisis

1. (:**14**) Importance of Responding with Discretion and Discernment

"*Then Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king's bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon;*"

Daniel didn't respond rashly; he didn't rant and rave and pout ("Why didn't you come to me first?); honest and prudent and wise and loving approach

2. (:**15**) Importance of Determining the Root Issue

"*he answered and said to Arioch, the king's commander, 'For what reason is the decree from the king so urgent?' Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter.*"

3. (:**16**) Importance of Confessing Our Limitations

"*So Daniel went in and requested of the king that he would give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king.*"

Required great boldness to ask the king for time to seek wisdom from God after the stalling tactics of the king's magicians had been rebuffed.

4. (:**17-18**) Importance of Galvanizing the Support of Intercessory Prayer

"*Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter, 18 in order that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.*"

Andrew Hill: The epithet "*the God of heaven*" is used four times in ch. 2 (**vv.18–19, 37, 44**) and may be a shortened form of the title for God found in the context of oath-taking in **Genesis 24:3**, "*the God of heaven and the God of earth*" (cf. **24:7**, "*the God of heaven,*" and "*the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth*," **Ge 14:22**). The expression "*the God of heaven*" is recognized as a divine title characteristic of the postexilic period and appears frequently in Ezra and Nehemiah (e.g., **Ezr 1:2; Ne 1:4**). The name speaks to God's transcendence and supremacy over all that is temporal and earthbound. This is why he knows the deep and hidden things and what lies in darkness (**v.22**).

II. (:19-30) THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE SOVEREIGN GOD – OUR SOURCE FOR TRUE WISDOM AND POWER

A. (:19-23) Praising God for the Sufficiency of His Wisdom and Power

"*Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision.*
Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven;"

- He is the *God of heaven*--in contrast to the religious superstitions of the Babylonians

1. (:**20**) Wisdom and Power Revealed as Attributes of God's Character

"*Daniel answered and said, 'Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him.'*"

- He is worthy of all worship because of His character –
Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever

- True wisdom and power are his domain

2. (:**21-22**) Wisdom and Power Revealed in the Sovereign Actions of God

"*And it is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, And knowledge to men of understanding. 22 It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him.*"

a. Controls Time and Space (all the dimensions known to man)
"*changes the times and the epochs*" -- the message of Daniel is God's unfolding of these times and epochs before they ever happen--an overview of world history and of the special role of Israel in God's program

b. Source of all Authority
"*removes kings and establishes kings*" (**Rom.13:1**)

c. Source of Wisdom and Knowledge

d. Gracious to give us wisdom and power when we need it to accomplish His will (**1 Cor. 1:26-31**)

Iain Duguid: The Lord alone possesses the power to control world events. The future does not rest in the hands of the Babylonian gods, to whom the diviners looked. Their gods are empty idols, with no power either to bless or to curse their followers (see **Isa. 46:5–10**). They cannot affect the future, for they themselves are blind, dumb, and impotent (**Isa. 44:18**). For all the pomp and show of the Babylonian diviners, their claims to anticipate the future are empty and void.

Paul Lederach: The eternal God also reveals deep and hidden things. When God reveals Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its meaning, Daniel and his friends come to realize that to

their God, the past and future are the same; darkness is no barrier to him, and light dwells with him. In many OT passages, God is described as surrounded by light, "*like a devouring fire*" (**Exod. 24:17**) or by "*rays*" flashing "*from his hand*" (**Hab. 3:4**). Isaiah sees God's brightness: "*The Lord will be your everlasting light*" (**Isa. 60:19-20**). The NT expresses these ideas more clearly. Paul writes, "*The king of Kings and Lord of lords… dwells in unapproachable light*" (**1 Tim. 6:15-16**). While James mentions the "*Father of lights*" (**James 1:17**), John is more explicit: "*God is light and in him there is no darkness at all*" (**1 John 1:5**). This light is a sign that God is good, right, and holy, and has wisdom to share.

3. (:**23**) Wisdom and Power Gifted to God's People in Times of Crisis

"*To Thee, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For Thou hast given me wisdom and power; Even now Thou hast made known to me what we requested of Thee, For Thou hast made known to us the king's matter.*"

B. (:24-30) Testifying to the Sufficiency of God's Wisdom and Power

This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed.

1. (:**24-25**) Gaining an Audience with the King

"*Therefore, Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and spoke to him as follows: 'Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Take me into the king's presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king.' 25 Then Arioch hurriedly brought Daniel into the king's presence and spoke to him as follows: 'I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king!'*"

2. (:**26-28a**) Glorifying God as the Revealer of Dreams

"*The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, 'Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?' 27 Daniel answered before the king and said, 'As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians, nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. 28 However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days.*"

- The importance of giving God all of the credit -- He was quick to give God all of the credit. He did not represent himself to the king as possessing special inherent powers.

- The importance of maintaining the distinction between God and man -- Some leaders forget their inability after God has worked thru them for repeated successes. The people must make sure they are trusting the resources of the All-Sufficient God rather than the charisma of a particular leader thru whom God might be working.

Stephen Miller: Here is a comforting message for believers today. There is a God in heaven, and this God may be called upon to supply sustenance and wisdom far beyond what is available from human resources. Although circumstances sometimes may look impossible from an earthly standpoint, there is a God in heaven who can do all things. He can solve seemingly insoluble problems, supply needs, and provide strength for impossible tasks. He is a God who is there and who is able.

Norman Porteous: The first and most important thing that Daniel tells the king about his dream is that it is **eschatological** in character. It concerns what is to happen at the end of the present age. The phrase used here and again in **10.14**, literally '*in the end of the days*', recurs in various contexts but always seems to denote the end of a perspective of history, 'the closing period of the future so far as it falls within the range of view of the writer using it' (S. R. Driver, Camb. B., p. 26). Sometimes the phrase refers to the closing days of history before the Messianic culmination when God will bring in his kingdom (see especially **Isa. 2.2** = **Micah 4.1**). That seems to be the meaning here. The king is being told by God how history is moving towards its consummation, and we are given to understand that the dream was sent to him because his mind was anxiously revolving thoughts about the destiny of the world.

3. (:**29**) Granting the King's Request

"*As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place.*"

Paul Lederach: Note the significant change in how God reveals himself. Here God reveals himself to a foreign ruler assisted by a Jewish wise person, and through the ruler to the whole world. Earlier in Israel's history, God revealed his intentions largely through the patriarchs and the prophets of Israel. In this story, God works through the subconscious mind of a Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, and also through his servant Daniel. God will enable Daniel to tell and interpret the dream which he has given Nebuchadnezzar as he lay upon his bed. The ultimate meaning of this dream embraces the whole world!

4. (:**30**) Guarding against Any Personal Credit for This Revelation

"*But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.*"

Iain Duguid: There is a model here for all of us in our relationships with those who do not know our God. In contrast to the self-promoting way of the world, we should constantly seek occasions to exalt and declare publicly the praises of our God. Whatever gifts and abilities we have, whatever successes we may meet with in life, all of them are ultimately the work of the one who gave us those gifts and opportunities, along with the diligence and perseverance to pursue them. We are simply God's servants, doing the work he has assigned to us; he deserves all of the praise and

adoration. The biblical word for this attitude is humility: the perspective that sees our own size rightly in comparison to the surpassing greatness of our God. . .

True humility comes, however, when we look away from ourselves towards God and towards the one who is God revealed in human flesh, Jesus Christ. He shows us genuine humility at work in his constant attitude of dependence upon his heavenly Father. He shows us authentic lowliness of heart that turns away from the spotlight and the position of glory to serve the outcasts and the unacceptable, the lepers and the notorious sinners. The Lord of all eternity demonstrated that servant's heart all the way to an inglorious death on the cross, reviled and spat upon, abandoned and alone.

III. (:31-45) DREAM OF THE GREAT STATUE AND ITS INTERPRETATION DELIVERED BY DANIEL

A. (:31-35) The Dream

1. (:**31-33**) Summary of the Initial Vision of the Awesome Statue

> "*You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. 32 The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.*"

Andrew Hill: The awesomeness of the statue in the king's dream was due both to its extraordinary size and dazzling brilliance (**v.31**). The statue had an identifiable human form, but it is unclear initially whether it represented a god or a human king. The statue was most unusual in its composition, cast in four different metals. The head was made of gold, the chest and arms were made of silver, the belly and thighs were made of bronze, the legs were made of iron, and the feet were made of an amalgam of iron and clay (**v.32–33**). The various metals suggest a combination of preciousness and strength in inverted emphasis as the statue is viewed from head to feet. That is, as one moves down the sequence of metals in the statue, its splendor dissipates (from gold to iron and clay) but its hardness increases (from gold to iron).

2. (:**34-35a**) Stone Smashing the Statue

> "*You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found.*"

3. (:**35b**) Stone Transformed into a Majestic Worldwide Mountain

> "*But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.*"

John Goldingay: All that is needed for the edifice to collapse is a chance rockfall to hit the statue at its weak point. The logic-suspending fantasy of dream then appears at its strongest as the awesome statue is not just toppled but in an instant turned into mere wheat husks as they are blown away from the threshing floors exposed to the wind (recalling **Isa 41:12–16**), while the rock grows into a monumental crag that dominates the whole world (recalling **Isa 2:2–3; 11:9**).

Stephen Miller: Several features of the rock would have impressed Nebuchadnezzar.
(1) Its origin was supernatural, for it was cut out of the mountain without human hands.
(2) The rock had extraordinary power, for it annihilated the statue.
(3) Its scope was worldwide as symbolized by the fact that it grew into a huge mountain and filled the earth. In **vv. 44–45** Daniel identified this great rock as the coming kingdom of God, and its development into a huge mountain symbolizes its universal dominion (cf. **Isa 2:2**; par. **Mic 4:1**).

B. (:36-44) The Interpretation

"*This was the dream; now we shall tell its interpretation before the king.*"

1. (:**37-38**) Current Kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar Identified as the Head of God

"*You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory; 38 and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.*"

2. (:**39-40**) Subsequent Three Kingdoms Will Arise

a. (:**39**a) Second Kingdom

"*And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you,*"

b. (:**39b**) Third Kingdom

"*then another third kingdom of bronze,*
which will rule over all the earth."

Paul Lederach: If the statue represents **successive empires**, which empires might they be? The movement from gold to silver, to bronze, to iron mixed with clay does indeed suggest decreasing value. But how are successive empires inferior to each other? Are they inferior because of less-capable leaders? less geographical area? population decrease? weakness militarily? economic decline? Is older thought to be better? In Daniel's fourth kingdom, inferiority is seen in **divisions** and **instability** (**2:42-43**).

c. (:**40-43**) Fourth Kingdom

"*Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron;*
inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces.
41 And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in

> *it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. 43 And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.*"

Iain Duguid: In fact, the transient nature of all worldly authority is one of the central features of the dream: it reminds us that every earthly kingdom has an "after this." No earthly kingdom is forever: the gold gives way to the silver, which in turn gives way to the bronze and the iron. What is more, the progress of the history of man in rebellion from God is not simply a pattern of change but of regress. It is not simply that you can never step in the same river twice, as the Greek philosopher Heraclitus famously pointed out; it is that the river keeps getting more and more polluted as it travels from its source. Far from journeying onward and upward until we finally reach the great city of man, we go from one transient kingdom to another, proceeding downward from gold to silver to bronze to iron, rather than in a positive direction. The final kingdom in the sequence is not only inferior in glory to the first—iron compared to gold—but inferior in unity as well: it is made of iron mixed with baked clay, an uneven mixture that cannot hold together (**Dan. 2:42–43**).

The one thing that remains constant about these various kingdoms is their lust for power and their desire to dominate the world (**Dan. 2:39–40**). The desire to rule and crush remains undiminished throughout the sequence, but ultimately that ambition will go frustrated. In the final analysis, the kingdoms of this world, however glorious or powerful they may seem, have "feet of clay," as we say, and will not stand. . .

How should we respond to this dream? In the first place, Nebuchadnezzar's dream encourages us to see reality around us more clearly. The transient nature of all earthly glory and power is an important reminder to modern readers, as well as ancient. *Sic transit gloria mundi* ("So passes the glory of the world") applies to modern America and Europe as well as to ancient Babylon. Whether our present earthly context is an actively hostile dictatorship or a relatively benevolent democracy, one day the glory and power of this kingdom too will come to an end, and there may be others after it. This world and its constantly changing kingdoms are not what life is all about.

John Goldingay: The next four chapters in Daniel itself do refer to four regimes. After Nebuchadnezzar (**2:37; 5:18**) comes Belshazzar (**5:28**), his "*son*" (**5:2, 11, 14, 18, 22**), who is to be "*inferior*" to him (cf. **5:22–28**). From Belshazzar the kingship passes to Darius the Mede (**5:31 [6:1**], cf. **6:28 [29**]); he counts the whole world as within his realm, like Nebuchadnezzar (6**:25–26 [26–27**]). The fourth king is indeed Cyrus, mentioned only at the close of the stories (**6:28 [29**]) but well known for his irresistible might (see **Isa 44:24–45:7**). He was said to have been part-Median, part-Persian and to have married a Persian (Herodotus, Histories 1.55–56, 107–9; Xenophon, Cyropaedia 1.2.1; 8.5.17–20). **Daniel 9:1** describes him as ruling over the empire of the Kasdim,

the implication being that the Medes and Persians bring a new dynasty but one that rules within the history of one empire. The perspective suggested by **ch. 1** and subsequent chapters, then, is that the four regimes in **ch. 2** span the period from **Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus**.

John MacArthur: [traditional conservative view] These empires are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the later revived Rom, each one differentiated form the previous as indicated by the declining quality of the metal. . . Christ's total shattering of Gentile power will result in the establishment of His millennial kingdom, the ultimate empire, and then continuing on eternally (**2:44; 7:27**).

Stephen Miller: In summary, the traditional interpretation is that the kingdoms represented by the colossus are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome; those who follow the Maccabean thesis generally identify them as Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece. . .

The vision of **chap. 7** confirms the number and identification of these toes, for scholars are in near unanimous agreement that the four beasts of **chap. 7** represent the same empires as those denoted by the four parts of the statue. In **chap. 7** ten horns grow out of the fourth beast (**7:7, 24**), and this symbolism corresponds to the ten toes proceeding from the fourth division of the statue. **Daniel 7:24** specifically states that the ten horns that protrude from the fourth beast represent "*ten kings*" (i.e., kingdoms or nations), and the ten toes of the statue may be assumed to signify the same. In light of **Dan 7** the contemporaneous "*kings*" of **v. 44** ("*in the time of those kings*") are best interpreted as those symbolized by the ten toes of the statue. Thus this final empire will consist of ten kingdoms (or nations) ruling jointly at the time of Christ's return. John the apostle also speaks of this eschatological ten-kingdom confederacy (cf. **Rev 13:1; 17:12**).

Whitcomb believes that this empire will be made up of **exactly** ten kings (nations), but the number ten **may symbolize** the completeness of the empire (complete in power and sovereignty) regardless of how many individual nations constitute it. For example, the "*ten days*" of **Rev 2:10** evidently signify a complete period of suffering rather than exactly ten days since that particular Roman persecution must have extended beyond a week and a half.

In summary, shortly before the second coming of Christ, ten (a literal or symbolic number) kingdoms (or nations) of unequal strength will unite to form a coalition that will rise out of the ruins of the ancient Roman Empire. Since Rome is part of Europe and the activities of that ancient empire centered in Europe, it is reasonable to assume that this area of the world will play a leading role in this future regime. In **Dan 7** the prophet indicates that from this empire will come the evil world leader of the last days commonly known as Antichrist.

3. (:**44**) Ultimate Kingdom of God Will Crush All Other Kingdoms and Endure Forever

"*And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom*

which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."

C. (:45) Authenticity and Reliability of This Dream and This Interpretation

"*Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy.*"

(:46-49) EPILOGUE – RESPONSE OF KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR

A. (:46) Prostrating Himself before Daniel

"*Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel, and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense.*"

Tremper Longman III: the concluding scene gives us a powerful picture that reinforces the theme of our book: The most powerful pagan in the world lies prostrate before an exiled Jew. Chills of excitement and the flames of hope will rise in the hearts of those who identify with Daniel and his God.

John Goldingay: Nebuchadnezzar's prostrating himself before Daniel does not imply worship, nor does that implication stem from presenting an offering (a gift: e.g., **Gen 43:11**) or from presenting fragrant oblations, which can be an aspect of the recognition of a king. It might be seen as a way of "demythologizing" deified kings, or as a natural way of honoring a benefactor, or as a way of honoring the God Daniel represents.

B. (:47) Proclaiming the Supremacy and Wisdom of Daniel's God

"*The king answered Daniel and said, 'Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery.'*"

Paul Lederach: Each story in the Aramaic section of Daniel ends with a revelatory statement about God that is announced to the whole world. The only exception is the story of Belshazzar (**chap. 5**); but even then, the death of the prince speaks eloquently of God's ability to act. Each story provides a setting to proclaim a truth about Daniel's God. Here Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, proclaims to the whole world who the God of Israel is:

1. *God of gods*: there are "*no other gods before*" him (cf. **Exod. 20:3**).
2. *Lord of kings*: he is sovereign over empires, rulers, and history.
3. *A revealer of mysteries*: he knows what is in darkness, and light dwells with him.

C. (:48-49) Promoting Daniel and His Friends to Leadership Positions

"*Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise*

men of Babylon. 49 And Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel was at the king's court."

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) What principles about interpreting prophecy do we need to apply to this section of Daniel? What are some of the mistakes in interpreting prophecy that we need to avoid? Note the liberal bias of commentators who reject the early date for the book of Daniel on the basis that he could not possibly have accurately predicted so many details about world history … Daniel teaches us clearly that (**vs 28**) "*there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days*."

2) Notice the combination of "*discretion and discernment*" in **vs. 14**. What are the consequences of missing either one of these two key ingredients?

3) To what or to whom do we wrongly attribute wisdom and power when we should be giving glory to the God who stands behind all wisdom and power?

4) In the midst of troubling world events and precarious times for our nation, how does the sovereignty of God and His control over the kingdoms of this world provide us with comfort and encouragement?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Tiger Gullett:
1. "My Wisdom Disgraces The Wisdom Of Man."
v.1-27, 30 (Key Verses: **1-10, 19, 27, 30**)

2. "I Desire To Reveal The Mysteries Of The World And My Word." **v.27-30**

3. "I Am The God Of Yesterday, Today, And Tomorrow." **v.31-33, 36-43**

4. "I Will Strike Down Earthly Kingdoms, And Rule From An Eternal Throne." **v.34-35, 44-45**

5. "I Will Use Simple Men To Exalt My Name And My Kingdom." **v.46-47**

6. "I Will Bless Those Who Serve Me From The Heart." **v.48-49**

Bradley Boydston: Big Problem, Big God, Big Answers
OUR GOD IS BIG ENOUGH TO GRANT EVEN THE MOST DIFFICULT REQUEST. This is the key point this morning. . .

There is a children's song that says it all so well. (And isn't that the way it often is? When you're in a pickle go back to what the preschool Sunday School teacher taught you.)

"My God is so big, so strong and so mighty! There's nothing my God cannot do! FOR YOU!"

That's the message of Daniel. And that's the good news.

Dan Morrison: **Confidence in God's Revelation**
Will this crisis turn into a disaster or will Daniel turn it into an opportunity for faith? As we study together this morning let us see if we can relate. You and I will encounter difficult and different circumstances that have the potential to change life, as we know it. Will these circumstances be the factor that causes us to lose our confidence in God or will it be an opportunity for us to continue to have confidence? Confidence is so important as we go about our daily lives, both in our relationship to God and our relationships to others.

1. Daniel's Dilemma **2:1-13**

2. Daniel's Decision **2:14-24;**

a. He did not panic; **14-16**; he did not get angry and try to get even; he used discretion and discernment; an attitude not of defeat or fighting back or trying to get even for being put in this position; He acted instead of reacting;

b. He prayed; **v17-19** he is seeking God, why, because he has confidence in God. If God cannot resolve this it can't be resolved, and he with faith and confidence is going to give God a chance. And what does God do? He comes through **v19**; How many of us pray really giving God a chance? Do we pray thinking this has gone too far, it is beyond the scope of fixing? Why seek God if you don't have confidence in Him? Don't waste your time or pretend, just go ahead and let the disturbed king have his way. (The enemy). He wants to destroy you, and while he picks up on something that he thinks will work, why don't you put him to shame by seeking God earnestly?

c. He praised; **v20-23**; note what Daniel has to say about the God he has confidence in; We need to ask ourselves, do we believe this about God? If the answer is yes, then we pray and wait accordingly.

3. Daniel's deliverance **v24-30**; will Daniel's deliverance come? Only if he takes what God has revealed into the situation. This is critical. If he does not take what God has

given him and tell the king or as we would say, apply it, the dilemma still exists. This was a hard word, this kingdom will be destroyed eventually and do you think for one minute that the king will want to hear this? No, but Daniel knows that this is the revelation God has given so he must take it into the situation. He gives God all the credit and takes this before a pagan king, what a risk. Once God reveals something to you stand on it, take it into the situation and you will not be ashamed or defeated. Will they always respond to the revealed word of God? No but that is not our problem. Our deliverance comes at the hand of God not the one we are presenting the word to.

Robert Deffinbaugh: **The Dream Which Nearly Became a Nightmare** --
To summarize the story up to this point, the situation looks dismal, if not disastrous, and by divine design. Only when things seem impossible is God's hand undeniably present. The king's demands were unreasonable because they were impossible, humanly speaking. Here at the point of impossibility, the powerlessness of the "gods" of the heathen became evident. The wise men who stood before Nebuchadnezzar confessed with their own lips that their gods could not accomplish what the king demanded. They even admitted that any "God" who could fulfill the king's request would be a "God" of a different (higher) order. . .

(**2:17-24**)
First, Daniel's praise focuses on the superiority of God to the "*gods*" of Babylon. Neither the wise men nor their gods could satisfy the king's demands. They were too difficult for them. God revealed the dream and its meaning for the king. The God who answered the prayers of Daniel and his friends was the "*God of heaven*" (**verse 19**), the God about whom the wise men spoke but did not know. As opposed to the Babylonian gods, whose purposes and plans were determined by the stars and seasons, the God of heaven changes the times and epochs.

Second, Daniel's prayer gives insight into the message which God was giving to Nebuchadnezzar through his dream. As the king pondered the future, God informed him through his dream that the future is in God's hands and is not determined by kings. Indeed, even the rise and fall of kings is the work of God and not men. Wisdom and power belong to God; and thus the king, who was looking to men, should have been looking to the God of Israel for wisdom.

Third, the dream demonstrated God's care for His people Israel. The four young Hebrew captives, about to be put to death, prayed for mercy and deliverance. Their request was answered with the revelation of the king's dream and its interpretation to Daniel. Even in captivity, God continues to care for His own. . .

(1) Our text contributes to our understanding of spiritual leadership. Daniel did not seek prominence. He did not set his sights on spiritual leadership. He sought to be faithful to His God and to his calling. It was only when he was put "between a rock and a hard place" that he stepped forward. It is often in the crisis situations of life that leaders emerge. So it was with Daniel. He was, in a sense, forced to lead. Had he not acted as he did (humanly speaking), he and his three friends would have died. Daniel's

leadership came about when he acted out of necessity and out of faith, in a way that set him apart from the rest. This seems to be the way most of the leaders in the Bible were set apart.

(2) Impossible situations expose the futility of human wisdom and power and of false gods and religions. At the same time, they provide the setting for which the power and wisdom of God to be undeniably demonstrated. God brought about the crisis of Daniel 2. In so doing, He showed the wise men of this world to be unwise, and by testimony of their own lips showed their gods powerless. God's power was so evident through the faith of Daniel and his friends that the king fell before this man and his God.

Robert Aubuchon:
A reporter once asked Albert Einstein's wife if she understood the theory of relativity. She replied, "No, but I know Albert, and he can be trusted." Can you and I say the same thing about God? "No, I don't understand what God is doing in my life right now. But I know God, and He can be trusted."

If we trust God, we can pray to God. Prayer is the glue that holds life together. The effectiveness of prayer as the adhesive of our lives depends on several factors.

- Slippage / Shrinkage
"*But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him*" (**Hebrews 10:38** NIV)

- Malleability (altered or controlled outside)
"*And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind ...*" **Romans 12:2a**

- Cohesive Strength
"*For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*"**Matt 18:20**

- Surface Tension
"*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*" **Philippians 4:6-7**

Prayer is not just lifting up a few words when in trouble. It is intended to be the glue for our lives. Apply in the days when you do not need it and it is sure to help hold you together in the day everything is coming apart.

Prayer: "Oh God, at times life seems to fall apart. Things don't always go as planned. Help us in those moments to acknowledge our lack of understanding. Break our pridefulness that causes us to believe we can handle life alone. Turn our pride to trust.. For when we trust You we can pray to You knowing you will answer in Your wisdom.

You are the answer to our prayers as the sovereign God. Nothing we are going through is unmindful to You ... You know and are working for our best.

Peter Wallace: **The Kingdom of God is at Hand**

1. "Till the Times Change" – Nebuchadnezzar and the Wise Men (v1-16)

So Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. And his spirit is troubled. When we hear the dream later, we immediately realize why he is troubled! It doesn't take a genius to figure out that this dream is about something powerful being destroyed! And he is the most powerful man in the world! No one is so powerful as to be above all fear! When you are climbing the ladder of influence and power, you always fear those who are above you – lest they prevent you from climbing higher! But more dangerous still are those who are below you! Those who topple you from your exalted perch! And that is the fear that we see in Nebuchadnezzar's interactions with the wise men.

And so he calls for the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans. These are the magi – the most wise and educated scientists of the ancient world. It would be some of these very magi who would come from the east when they see the star. Their astronomical skills had some value! Perhaps their encounter with Daniel – and with generations of Jews that remained in Babylon – taught them some measure of respect for Daniel's God. Just like the Babylon of old, our Babylon also values education and learning. Our Babylonian scholars study the stars and seek to penetrate the secrets of understanding all of human life. We are not so different as we would like to think! *4 Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic,[a] "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.*"

The next six chapters will be in Aramaic – the language of the king's court. **Chapter 1** was in Hebrew – the language of the Jews. Now we will spend the next six chapters in the language of the surrounding nations. We are in a foreign land – we live in the midst of a foreign tongue. Aramaic and Hebrew are quite similar – like French and Spanish. If you know French you can figure out a fair amount of Spanish, but you won't really understand anything nuanced.

The Chaldeans now expect the king to tell them the dream, and then they will consult their manuals of interpretation and explain the meaning of the dream. But Nebuchadnezzar refuses to tell them the dream. He even threatens them with a brutal death if they fail. So they try again – "*tell us the dream*!" But for some reason Nebuchadnezzar is suspicious. And our text gives us a hint: "*you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change.*" In other words, Nebuchadnezzar doesn't trust them. He thinks that there is a conspiracy among the magi against him.

Now, from what we know of Babylonian history, this would not be surprising! The priests of Marduk were very powerful in the city of Babylon. And while they liked the fact that Nebuchadnezzar (and his father) had restored Babylonian supremacy over Assyria, they didn't especially like sharing power with him in Babylon! We know from Babylonian documents that there were tensions between Nebuchadnezzar and the

priests and wise men of Babylon in his first few years. They are trying to figure out a way of controlling him – and he is trying to assert his rule and control over them! At any rate, Nebuchadnezzar is convinced that there is a conspiracy against him, and so he is not about to give them ammunition by telling them the details of a dream that they could use against him! (His threat to kill them all probably would only have been applied to the lesser magi – it is unlikely that he could have killed the most powerful magi without provoking a rebellion in Babylon! Which probably explains why they came for Daniel and his friends first!)

Verse 11 is the key to the whole chapter: no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. What you see in **verse 11** is the confession of the magi that paganism has failed. We simply don't have access to divine knowledge. Unless God should reveal himself, we are stuck in this world of flesh. Of course, this is what we celebrate during Advent – that our God has come to dwell in the flesh! But the Chaldeans are acknowledging that they do not have divine knowledge. They cannot access the hidden things.

12 *Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.* The problem for Nebuchadnezzar is that God is God – and he is not! I don't suppose that any of you have actually ordered the death of others – but I would guess that most of us have wished that we could! When others fail us, we seek to destroy them. And we use whatever weapons we have available to us! Nebuchadnezzar, of course, is the Great King – so he orders the actual death penalty!

(:13-16) -- And so now we see the problem for Daniel and his friends. They were not included in the group who appeared before the king, since they were foreigners – and youngsters. After all this is only "*In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar*…" (**v1**). We saw last time that Daniel and his friends are engaged in a three-year training program. Nebuchadnezzar became king in 605 BC – the same year that he took hostages from Jerusalem. In Babylonian accounts, the accession year is "year zero" – so the "second year" is actually year three. So Daniel and his friends are either at or near the end of their training. But even if they have completed their studies, even if they have been very impressive in their acquisition of Babylonian learning, they are still foreigners – and so they would not have been welcomed into the inner circle of Babylonian wise men. There would have been hundreds of wise men in Babylon, and only a handful of senior scholars would appear regularly before the king. (Think of the bureaucracy in Washington DC – how many state department employees regularly see the President?) But when Daniel hears of the king's decree, he immediately goes to make an appointment with the king. Why does he have such confidence? God has made no promise! Daniel understands that God has put him here "for such a time as this." God has shown him favor thus far – so there must be a reason for his presence in the king's court. And dying after three years does not seem to be it!

2. "He Changes Times and Seasons" – Daniel and the God of Heaven (v17-30)
(:**17-18**) - So he goes to his friends and asks them to pray – to "*seek mercy from the God of heaven*." In the Aramaic section of the book, we most commonly hear the

LORD referred to as "the God of heaven." In the midst of trouble – in the face of a crisis of life or death – you go to God and ask for mercy! But notice the importance of prayer for Daniel and his friends. Daniel may be wise – but even he cannot know Nebuchadnezzar's dream without divine revelation! We will hear later in **Daniel 6** that his custom was to pray three times a day. That regular pattern of prayer provides a solid foundation for the prayer that they offer immediately that night!

Why do we pray to a God who knows all things – and who has foreordained all things from before the foundation of the world? Some have said that we pray, not so much for God's sake, as for ours – so that we might be changed. But that misses one of the most fundamental things about prayer. I would put it like this. If Daniel and his friends do not pray, then God does not reveal the dream to Daniel. Because it will not do to say that God would have revealed it anyway! God does not reveal his purposes to those who do not love him and seek his face! Indeed, God uses our prayers to accomplish his purposes! And indeed, through their prayers, God delivers them and reveals the mystery to Daniel in a vision of the night.

Verses 20-23 function as the theological center of the chapter: Nebuchadnezzar had feared that the wise men of Babylon were lying to him '*until the times change*' – now Daniel confesses that the God of heaven is the one 'who changes times and seasons' – and yes, that means exactly what Nebuchadnezzar fears: "*he removes kings and sets up kings.*" But also, "*he reveals deep and hidden things*" – the wisdom of the wise is found in him. All wisdom and might belong to God. Into the darkness of paganism comes the light of the revelation of God.

(:24) -- Notice that Daniel intercedes on behalf of the wise men of Babylon. They may be pagans – but they are still in the image of God. The coming of the gospel brings light into the midst of pagan darkness. And with that light comes grace and truth. Daniel does not wish to see the magi killed. He wants to see them repent and believe the gospel. Here we see one of the mysteries of the Christian faith. What is it that brings a person to faith in Christ? You would think that miracles and divine interventions would do the trick! And yet many of those who see such events refuse to believe. In one sense, the fact that someone is close to the Kingdom of God doesn't really help – since only the will of God – only God's voice calling us out of darkness into light – can actually be effectual in saving us!

And so Arioch brings Daniel before the king. **(:25-30**) - Notice the density of '*wisdom*' words in **verses 25-30** *make known* – **v25, 26, 28, 29, 30** *interpretation* – **v25, 26, 30** *reveal mysteries* – **27, 28, 29, 30** But when Nebuchadnezzar asks, are you able to make known to me the dream and its interpretation, Daniel immediately discounts his own ability. No, I cannot do this – your magicians are correct – paganism has failed! But there is a God in heaven – and he has already revealed to Nebuchadnezzar his purposes for history. And so Daniel explains the dream:

3. "A Kingdom That Shall Never Be Destroyed" – The Dream Interpreted (v31-45)
(:31-35) -- The dream was of an image. Ordinarily, an image of this sort is found in a

temple. But notice that while this image has four parts, the parts make up a single image. Remember that! Because you will be tempted to divide this image into four distinct entities – whereas Nebuchadnezzar's dream did not! It is a single image – with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, middle and thighs of bronze, and legs of iron – with feet partly of iron and partly of clay. And then a stone struck the image (like David's stone struck Goliath) and the image was broken in pieces and destroyed, while the stone becomes a great mountain and fills all the earth.

(:36-45) -- Nebuchadnezzar's dream becomes the foundation for the rest of the dreams and visions for the whole book of Daniel. There are four kingdoms – starting with Babylon – and in the days of the fourth kingdom, the God of heaven will establish an everlasting kingdom. Traditionally, the four kingdoms have been identified as Babylon ('*You, O king'*), Persia, Greece (which shall rule over all the earth), and Rome (partly of clay, partly of iron – a divided kingdom). After all, it was in the days of Rome that Jesus came. And Jesus is the one who smashes the kingdoms with his rod of iron (**Psalm 2**) – it is worth noting that the smashed image became like chaff – which the wind drives away (**Psalm 1**)

But as we will see throughout Daniel's visions, the identity of the kingdoms can get a little murky. This is common in apocalyptic literature: because one purpose of apocalyptic literature is to help the people of God to live faithful lives in the midst of difficult times. The prophets regularly called people to repent or perish – with a promise of salvation at the end to those who turned back to the LORD. But apocalyptic writings are generally written to the faithful – calling them to remain faithful – to persevere in the midst of trials – with a promise of salvation to those who persevere to the end. This also means that the final phase of apocalyptic prophesy is designed for whatever phase you are living in! (which is why every generation is convinced that "this is it"!)

But remember the central point of the dream – and the reason why it struck such terror into the heart of Nebuchadnezzar! There is only one image – and that one image was entirely destroyed by the stone. Nebuchadnezzar had undoubtedly suspected that he was the image. (That's why he didn't want to give the Magi any ammunition against him!) If they knew that he had had a divine dream in which he was cast down, they would be more than happy to help bring that dream to pass!! The singular image, however, reminds us that we are not just talking about a succession of empires. We are talking about "empire." Babylon will not die with Nebuchadnezzar. When the Persians take over, they will take over the mantle of "Babylon." And so while the dream includes four parts – the four parts are less about historical sequence and more about the fact that empires come and empires go – but all empires partake of the spirit and image of Babylon.

There is a trajectory, however, in the vision. From gold to silver to bronze to iron and a blending of iron and clay. In other words, from greater value to lesser value. But also from softer to harder – with the final kingdom being complicated and problematic. There is a picture here of the degeneration and disintegration of history – and yet, the

story is not all pessimism! Because there is also the stone – there is also the kingdom of God – a kingdom that begins small, but smashes the kingdoms of this age, and grows until it fills the whole earth! Jesus is King!

4. "Then the King Gave Daniel High Honors" (v46-49)
46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him. This is remarkable. Not so much that Nebuchadnezzar does this – he is, after all, a pagan king, and Daniel has just done what no mere mortal could possibly do! In the Babylonian mind, if a mortal does what only gods can do, then that mortal is at least semi-divine, and thus is worthy of worship… What is remarkable is that our author records this. Jews, after all, do not bow down and worship mere mortals, and so the idea that Daniel accepted this worship is rather striking. (Of course, Daniel is in a difficult spot. He has the Great King of Babylon falling at his feet and worshiping him. What is he going to say, "No, King, don't do it!"?)

But Nebuchadnezzar also recognizes what Daniel had said about his God: *47 The king answered and said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery."* Indeed, Nebuchadnezzar's statement in **verse 47** echoes and supports what Daniel had said in the middle of the story – the God of heaven is truly the one who reveals wisdom and knowledge and might.

(:48-49) -- All of this is nice and good, but notice what is missing. Nebuchadnezzar does not repent. Nebuchadnezzar thinks of Daniel's God as an impressive source of wisdom – but remember, this is the second year of Nebuchadnezzar. This is roughly 602 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar will order another attack on Jerusalem in 598. And another one in 588 – that will result in the fall of the city and the destruction of the temple of the God whom he praises here!

What's going on? Well, Daniel gave him an interpretation of the dream that fits his own dreams! He is the head of gold. And the destruction of the image is in the far distant future – not even in his own lifetime! This dream cannot be used against him! Indeed, it may even be that Daniel's interpretation causes Nebuchadnezzar to bring this image into being, as it were – which will be our story next time! But while we may live in day where the rulers of this age are busily engaged in building their own empires, Remember the stone – the stone that the builders rejected! Dale Ralph Davis offers us words of encouragement: "This solid assurance of the victory of God's kingdom is meant to bring a contagious certainty to the people of God, people so often squashed under the arrogant heels of earth's kingdoms and rulers." You should never despair because you know that Jesus Christ is king of kings and lord of lords!

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **Keeping Your Head in a Crisis (2:1-30)**
Introduction: Keeping your head when everyone else is losing theirs.
This story of Daniel reminds me of a classic poem that was written by a famous poet by Rudyard Kipling, and the name of the poem is simply one word, **if.** If this is perhaps the

most famous poem that he ever wrote. And as soon as he wrote it, it gained worldwide attention in 1909. This is what was called a didactic poem in the sense that it was a poem that was designed to give instruction and to teach. And the major theme that the poem is teaching is someone who is able to keep his head in the midst of a crisis, someone who is able to face a crisis and face it victoriously, wisely, maturely.

> *if you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you, if you can trust yourself when all men doubt you, but make allowance for their doubting, too, if you can wait and not be tired by waiting or being lied about and don't deal in lies or being hated and don't give way to hating and yet don't look too good or talk too wise. If you can dream and not make dreams your master, if you can think and not make thoughts your aim, if you can meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two imposters just the same. . .*
>
> *If you can do all this, yours is the earth and everything that's in it. And which is more, you'll be a man, my son.*

Daniel was a man who knew how to keep his head when everyone else around them were losing theirs and doing all kind of foolish things.

I. God is sovereign over your crisis

He lived under a godless government. And he was an uncompromising man, and he practiced civil disobedience, yet he did it in a way that brought great respect by his superiors, so much so that they favored him, despite the fact that he practiced civil disobedience. Friend, that is wisdom.

Notice the reward. *And as for the four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom. And Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.* Now, this is a gift that God gives to Daniel. And we're going to see how this gift comes into play in chapter 2. Whenever God gives you a gift, you know what else he's going to give you? The **opportunity to use that gift.** And there's a sense in which God is preparing Daniel in advance for the crisis that comes.

I want you to see God's hand in all of this. Not only did God give Daniel the gift, and not only did God give Nebuchadnezzar the dream, but God is the one who controlled the heart of Nebuchadnezzar not to tell these men what the dream was.

II. People often overreact, making matters worse

We see here the king overreacts. If you don't tell me this, I'm going to cut you into pieces. That is, I'm going to dismember you. I'm going to hack you in pieces. You'll be pulled apart. And by the way, dismemberment was practiced widely throughout the ancient Orient. And your houses will be turned into a dunghill, and that is into rubble, into a rubbish heap. This was no idle threat from this king who did whatever he wanted to do. This is classic overkill. This is a man who is abusing his authority. He threw a royal fit.

I want you to notice another thing that makes matters worse. And that is these wise men act foolishly. Why? Because they keep reverting back to the same thing. **Verse 7**, they answered again and said, let the king tell his servants a dream and we'll show the interpretation. They keep asking, tell us the dream. And all this does is it make matters worse. It's making the king angry. Someone said insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.

Sometimes the people who should be providing leadership in a crisis only make matters worse. They're not helping the situation at all. The king is overreacting. The wise men are acting foolishly.

III. Man's wisdom is insufficient – 2:10

These guys are really admitting the inability of human wisdom. In a crazy way, they're admitting that they're not real. I mean, there's no man that can do this. One thing God enjoys doing is revealing the futility and weakness of human wisdom. Ian Duguid wrote this, the wisdom of the world looks outwardly very impressive with its qualifications and influence in high places in our society. Yet at the root, the wisdom of the world is always an empty sham.

IV. Remember to stay calm and get all the facts – 2:13

Daniel gets all the facts He gets all the facts about what's going on and He doesn't overreact He has all the facts and so therefore he's able to act correctly. Why was Daniel able to successfully ask the king for **more time** while the others were unsuccessful? Daniel's wise actions, even in his civil disobedience and the manner in which he did it, it brought favor upon Daniel by these leaders. And the king knew that Daniel was wise. He knew that there was something different about him. And so what Daniel did earlier is still helping him out. He gained great respect.

V. Pray for wisdom – 2:17

Prayer is important. You know why? Because it demonstrates that we are dependent upon Almighty God. You have to be dependent upon God or all your gifts will fail and do nothing. God's special servants are people of prayer.

VI. Remember to worship God in the midst of your crisis – 2:19

It takes faith to thank and praise God when you have the sentence of death hanging over you.

VII. Do not be distracted by self-seeking opportunists – 2:24

Here's a man who wants to take credit. And here's a man who wants to use this for his own political advantage. You know, sometimes the best way to display something noble and something beautiful is to contrast it with something that's not. And I think that's what's happening here. In the middle of a crisis, a person's character will be revealed. Here's Daniel, a man of character and integrity, doing what's right, and all around him are people that are saying and doing foolish things.

VIII. Every crisis presents unique opportunities to glorify God – 2:26
I want to tell you there's a God in heaven, and He has the answer.

Conclusion: Did you know that test pilots have a litmus test for evaluating problems? They're up there and they're flying when something goes wrong. They have a list of things that they remind themselves of. List of questions that they ask him and here's the first one. Is this thing still flying? We're living in a world where all the alarms are going off. But you know what, friend? This thing is still flying in the right direction. You know why? Because God is the one in control.

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **A Blueprint of the Future – 2:31-49**
Introduction: There is a new theism that is gaining momentum = **open theism** = the theology that God doesn't know the future. The future is open because, you know, God. is still omniscient, but it's a **qualified omniscience**, because God can only know what is reality. And since the future is not yet reality, then God therefore can't know the future. God knows all things, but he knows all things that are knowable. And so what this theology does is it basically ultimately redefines God. **Is. 46:9; Dan. 2:28**

I want us to look at just three features of the dream that Daniel interprets for King Nebuchadnezzar, that lay out the blueprint for the future of the Gentile kingdoms.

I. The Image of the Dream – 2:31
A. Deteriorating Worth
This was an awesome, imposing, gigantic, massive, dazzling image that he saw in his dream. Notice also its **deteriorating worth**. Each of the parts below the head became less valuable and less impressive. There was the increasing of the sin of mankind. And so, Daniel seems to be suggesting that the sinfulness of the world would continue to increase until the culmination of history.

Each of the medals has a lower gravity. That is, gold is 19.3, silver is 10.5, bronze is 8.5, iron is 7.6, and clay is 1.9. That means that the top of the statue was twice as heavy as the bottom of the statue. And so this kind of suggests to us that there's going to be a precarious balance in the world, in the kingdoms of the world, until the time of Jesus Christ. and also a deterioration from the bottom. It's going to be much weaker.

B. Devastating Weakness
This stone comes and it hits the statue at its base. And when it does, it just crushes the statue. It topples the top-heavy statue, this image, hitting it at the weakest spot, the feet of the iron and the clay, and then it proceeds to smash the whole statue to pieces. Now, again, in **verse 35**, the stone becomes a great mountain that fills the whole earth.

II. The Interpretation of the Dream – 2:36
It's fitting, I think, that **gold** represents Babylon because gold was a highly valued metal in Babylonian history. In fact, the ancient historian Herodotus visited Babylon 70 years after it fell. And he said that he had never seen such a proliferation of gold as what he saw in Babylon. And he said the city was just filled with gold. He said he estimated that

more than twenty two tons of gold. The chief deity in the Babylonian pantheon of God was Marduk. He was known as the God of Gold. Herodotus also described the image of Marduk, which was a dazzling sight. It was a golden statue seated upon a golden throne before a golden table with a golden altar. And Pliny tells us that the robes of Marduk's priests were interlaced with gold. And so Babylon was noted as a **kingdom of gold**.

One of the things about the Medo-Persian Empire was it was noted for its guess what? **Silver.** Interesting, huh? It's silver or its money. The Medo-Persian Empire developed a vast system of taxation that required taxes to be paid in silver. Again, Herodotus, the historian, notes this. Artaxerxes I, who inherited this incredible fortune from his father Darius I, used these monies to finance the massive Persian Wars against the Greeks.

Greek Empire -- Alexander's soldiers armed themselves in, guess what? **Brass** or bronze. They were armed in bronze. They carry brass helmets and breastplates and carry bronze and brass spears. Brass became a sign and a symbol of Greek conquest and of the Greek empire,

Roman Empire -- here is a kingdom of **iron.** Iron is the strongest of the metals and breaks and shatters everything. Historians, when they refer to Rome, they often use the word iron in it. They talk about Roman's iron rule or Roman's iron hand or Roman's iron grip or the Rome's iron legions or its iron heel. What we notice also in this statue is that the Rome was split. We see the two legs that are each of iron, which kind of all signifies the Roman Empire splitting. And if you look at history, indeed, that did happen. The empire split on from the west side to the east side, the west with its capital in Rome. It was a Greek speaking province and then also east with its capital on Constantinople, which is modern Istanbul or Turkey, which includes also the land of Israel.

Next we see the feet of clay and iron mixed together. And this implies. That there's going to be a revival of the Roman Empire. Now, the Roman Empire is kind of just declined and come to nothing in history. But what this implies here is that there is going to be some type of revival in the end times. Since the feet and toes of iron and clay emanate from the iron legs that symbolize the old Roman Empire. There has to be some kind of a connection.

Again, we know that the stone refers to Christ. **Psalm 118:22** –

> *The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner. And this is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes.*

In other words, in this psalm here, the stone which the builders rejected is the capstone or the headstone. Now, this verse in Psalms refers to a very interesting thing that happened during the construction of the temple of Solomon's temple. They didn't cut out the stones right there on the site. Right. They quarried the stone from many miles away. They brought it to the temple site and the site there was to be what? Silent, quiet. It was too holy a site for them to make noise with hammers.

They noticed that there was an odd shaped stone that didn't really fit anything. They couldn't understand what it was there for. And so after trying to find out where it fit and realize it didn't fit in anywhere, they took this odd shaped stone and they set it aside. They completely brushed it aside. And they continued in their construction until finally, when they were near completion and the time came for them to take the capstone and put it in place, they sent away to the quarry and asked them to send the capstone so we can put it in place. We're ready for it. And word came back. that they had already sent the stone, it was already there. And the builders began to look around and sure enough, here was this stone that they had previously rejected. The previously rejected stone was the stone that was to become the capstone of the temple.

III. The Implications of the Dream

A. History reveals a succession of nations rising and falling

B. Transfer of leadership among nations

God seems to have a leading nation at different times of history. We are still the leading nation at this time of history. That's not going to last. What was God's plan from the very beginning? Who should have been the lead nation in the world? Who? Israel, right? **Exodus 9:6; Isaiah 49:3**

Yet Israel failed in its mission. It totally turned its back on God. It worshiped false gods. God punished Israel. And because of their sin, because of their failure to fulfill the mission that God originally gave it, God took them into captivity. And from that time until even now, they have lost that glory. And that glory will not be restored until Jesus Christ comes back, the son of David, and sets up his throne here on earth. Until that time, Israel will be under the dominion of the Gentile nations.

C. Message of comfort for the Jews

I think this prophecy here lets them know that God had not forsaken them forever. Neither had God forgotten the covenant. This is a reminder that God was still going to fulfill his purpose.

D. We are rapidly approaching the culmination of God's end time

How do you explain what's happening in the world today? You say what's happening? Well, there's the revival of the Roman Empire. This began all the way back after World War Two. Did you know it was Winston Churchill who said that we need to come together -- talking about Europe. There has to be a unification and nationalism needs to be set aside so that we can all come together as one. That's what he was saying. And then on March 25, 1957, there was a major step towards this at the Treaty of Rome that was signed on one of the famous seven hills of Rome. European nations began to come together, Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and so on. And then in 1973, there was the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark that joined all the way until to the present day. You know how many nations are a part of this confederacy now? Twenty seven. Twenty seven to ten can signify **completeness**. All we know is this, is that we are seeing right now the revival of the Roman Empire, the unification of Europe.

TEXT: Daniel 3:1-30

TITLE: THE SUPREMACY OF GOD VS PAGAN IDOLATRY

BIG IDEA:
THE GOD WHO IS SUPREME IN SAVING POWER DESERVES OUR UNSWERVING LOYALTY DESPITE THE PRESSURE OF INTENSE PERSECUTION

INTRODUCTION:

Daniel and his friends were in a pagan environment that was hostile towards the worship of the true God. They faced the dilemma of remaining faithful to God's revealed will while trying to submit to the God-ordained authority of King Nebuchadnezzar. When there was a conflict between these two objectives, sometimes a creative alternative will do the trick (cf. **Daniel 1**), but at other times the choice is plain:

- Remain loyal and be willing to pay the price (recognizing God's ability to deliver if He chooses) or
- Compromise to protect yourself.

Norman Porteous: The story in this chapter is a simple one simply told. Daniel, who was the hero in **chapter 2**, is surprisingly not mentioned at all, and the stage is occupied by his three companions, referred to by their Babylonian names, who courageously defy an order of King Nebuchadnezzar rather than compromise their loyalty to their God. By a miracle they are delivered from a dreadful death. Astounded at this evidence of the power of God, the pagan king decrees that worship of the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego shall henceforth be permissible.

John Goldingay: One can only guess at the reason behind Daniel's absence from the chapter. The effect of his absence is to make the story complement the previous chapters in which he has been the key figure. While the three men are not exactly ordinary Judahites, they are not in the same league as Daniel, and their story might speak in a distinctive way to ordinary Judahites.

Paul Lederach: A central theme of the story about the golden image is **worship** (**3:5-6, 10-12, 14-15, 18, 28**). There is the interplay between set up (**3:1-3, 5, 7, 12, 14, 18**) and fall down (**3:5-7, 10-11, 15**). The story has universal dimensions, with meaning for all peoples, nations, and languages (**3:4, 7, 29**).

Iain Duguid: People can serve whatever god they choose, so long as it is clear that he takes second place to the state. When put in these terms, it becomes evident that our culture places the same pressure on each one of us to put our God in second place, albeit in more subtle ways. We too find ourselves constantly pressed to keep our beliefs private, and therefore secondary. We are told that the public sphere must be kept untainted by any religion, for any other opinion threatens the unifying dogma of the

separation of church and state. We can believe whatever we want, by all means. However, we are strongly discouraged from talking about it or trying to influence the beliefs of others. In our public schools, any hypothesis may be taught in a science class, except the idea that the universe shows the hallmarks of intelligent design. Similarly, my son was once told that he could read any book he liked in study hall of his public school, so long as it was not the Bible. Thankfully, in our society, we are not likely to get shot or thrown into a fiery furnace for being the odd one out, and we still have a remarkable amount of freedom, but we still feel other kinds of pressure to conform and put the demands of our God in second place.

Andrew Hill: The structure of the story identified by Lucas may be outlined as follows:

A Nebuchadnezzar's decree to worship the golden image (**vv.1–7**)
B The Jews accused (**vv.8–12**)
C The Jews threatened (**vv.13–15**)
D The Jews confess their faith (**vv.16–18**)
C′ The Jews punished (**vv.19–23**)
B′ The Jews vindicated (**vv.24–27**)
A′ Nebuchadnezzar's decree honoring the Jews and their God (**vv.28–30**)

The court story of **ch. 2** portrays a God who can reveal the mysteries of heaven, while the court story of **ch. 3** shows that there is a God who miraculously intervenes in individual and national life (cf. Goldingay, 75). Both portrayals of Israel's God are important, lest the Babylonians assume that their conquest of Judah meant their gods were greater than the God of the Hebrews. By miraculously delivering his three servants from incineration in the king's furnace (along with the other miracles in the book of Daniel), "Yahweh made it clear to Nebuchadnezzar (who blatantly challenged Yahweh's power by his actions in this incident) and to the entire world that Judah's defeat was not because their God did not exist or was anemic" (Miller, 126).

I. (:1-12) IDOLATRY CHALLENGES THE SUPREMACY OF GOD AND CREATES INTENSE PERSECUTION

(:1) Nebuchadnezzar Sets Up His Image of Gold to be Worshiped

1. Motivated by Pride, Nebuchadnezzar Exalts Himself

"*Nebuchadnezzar the king*"

- Misrepresenting his God-given authority as absolute, intrinsic authority
- Abusing his power

2. Massive Statue = Impressive Visual Display of Supremacy

"*made an image of gold,*
the height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits;"

Nebuchadnezzar went to a lot of trouble and expense to build this image. The image was spectacular -- 90 feet high by 9 feet;

probably overlaid with gold.
The image had both political and religious significance.

Iain Duguid: The idea of an enormous golden statue reminds us immediately of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in the previous chapter. In that dream, the statue had a head of gold, which represented Nebuchadnezzar, while the rest of the body was made of other materials, which depicted the lesser kingdoms that would come after him and end up in fragmentation, destroyed by the coming of God's kingdom (**Dan. 2:31–35**). Nebuchadnezzar's statue, however, was made entirely of gold in an apparent attempt to counteract the dream. It was a defiant statement asserting that there would be no end or "after this" with respect to his kingdom, but rather that his glory would continue forever.

Paul Lederach: It is also possible that the image is built in honor of Nabu, a Babylonian deity. Nebuchadnezzar's name incorporates the name of this deity: "*Nabu, protect my son*" or "*Nabu, protect my boundary*." Whether an image of himself or of his god, it is a monument to Nebuchadnezzar's **pride**. This may explain his violent rage when persons refuse to bow to it.

Stephen Miller: Large statues constructed by kings of ancient times were not uncommon. For example, the Great Sphinx in Egypt (240 ft. long by 66 ft. high) with its lion body and human head was constructed about 2500 B.C. and still casts its sightless glare over the desert sands. Rameses II and other pharaohs built large statues of themselves and placed them throughout Egypt. Additional examples of huge statues are the Colossus of Rhodes (ca. 300 B.C.), which stood 105 feet tall, and the great Statue of Zeus (forty ft. high) at Olympia, Greece (fifth century B.C.). According to the Greek historian Herodotus, there was a statue of Bel (Marduk) in Babylon (at least as early as the time of Cyrus) made of solid gold that stood eighteen feet high.8 With all of the wealth and manpower available to him, Nebuchadnezzar was fully able to construct the image described here.

3. Majestic Setting

"*he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.*"

No fear of God; a blatant challenge

Iain Duguid: What is more, the location of the statue was significant, for the Babylonian plain was the location for the building of the Tower of Babel in **Genesis 11:2**. The Tower of Babel had a twofold function in the mind of its builders: it was a defiant attempt to make a name for the people who built it as a lasting legacy to their glory, and also to prevent the people from being scattered throughout the earth, as God had decreed (**Gen. 11:4**). Nebuchadnezzar's statue had the same two goals in mind: it was designed to establish a lasting testimony to his glory and to provide a unifying focus for the kingdom. This is why he summoned not merely local dignitaries but all of the leading officials from throughout his empire—the satraps, the prefects, the governors, the advisors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the other provincial

officials—to gather before the statue for its dedication (**Dan. 3:2**). This occasion was a public statement that the unity of Nebuchadnezzar's empire was rooted in the common worship of his image, a religious unity which he was willing to enforce with the threat of death if necessary (**3:6**).

Key Question = **Who has the supreme authority?**
God's Supreme Authority is challenged by **pressure** brought from 3 groups:

A. (:2-6) Proud Men in Positions of Power Challenge God's Authority and Standards, Promote Idolatry, and Threaten Persecution

1. (:2-3) Collection of Powerful Leaders for the Dedication of the Idol

> "*Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. 3 Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.*"

The dedication ceremony was impressive:

- important people in attendance
- appropriate pomp and ceremony

Tremper Longman III: Nebuchadnezzar not only built the statue; he demanded a **public demonstration of adoration**. For this purpose, he issued a call for "*the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials*" to attend its dedication. With this rather imposing list of officials, we encounter a lengthy list that is repeated a number of times in the chapter. These lists appear ponderous to us, but their literary effect is to heighten the tension and the feeling of danger toward the three friends, who will soon be singled out of the group. As Fewell states it, "through repetition, the narrator creates a scenario in which conformity is normative, disobedience is unthinkable." The various categories of people in the list are political officials from around the empire, which may signal that this was Nebuchadnezzar's attempt to solidify control over the diverse elements of his vast empire.

2. (:4-5) Command to Worship the Golden Image

> "*Then the herald loudly proclaimed: 'To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language, 5 that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up.*'"

3. (:6) Coercion Via Threat of the Fiery Furnace = Bow or Burn

"*But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire.*"

B. (:7) The Masses Promote Idolatry By the Pressure of Conformity (:7)

"*Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.*"

They use impressive music performances to pressure people to respond on the basis of their emotional mood in the context of peer pressure rather than on the basis of truth and biblical conviction.

They use a fiery furnace to frighten the fence sitters into compliance.

C. (:8-12) The Enemies of God's People Make Every Effort to Enforce Idolatry

"*For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. 9 They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: 'O king, live forever! 10 You yourself, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe, and all kinds of music, is to fall down and worship the golden image. 11 But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. 12 There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.*"'

- God's enemies attack God's people out of a desire to get ahead and promote themselves.
- Satan is the ultimate accuser of the people of God and uses whatever means he can to take the offensive and promote worldliness and idolatry.
- The world notices when God's people take a stand against idolatry.

Iain Duguid: Standing up for God will often be a **lonely activity**. There are times in every life when to do what is right we cannot simply hide in the crowd; we have to stand more or less alone. Sometimes it will seem that the whole world is watching, as when Martin Luther stood before the church authorities at the Diet of Worms. Called upon to abandon his commitment to justification by faith alone before a gathering of the Catholic authorities, Luther boldly declared, "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason . . . my conscience is captive to the Word of God, I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen." Luther's example shows us that at times we may even have to **stand alone** for what is right within the church itself.

Stephen Miller: "*Denounced*" is literally "*ate the pieces of*," a phrase suggesting severe hatred and bitter language. "Chewed them out" might be a comparable English idiom, though not as harsh. These astrologers expressed great hostility toward "*the Jews*." Although personal jealousy was likely the primary motive for the astrologers' animosity, anti-Semitism may have been involved.

Andrew Hill: These "worship police" have <u>two motives</u>: ethnic or racial distrust (if not hatred) given the references to the "Jews" (**vv.9, 12**), and professional jealousy given the reference to the status of the three Hebrews as rulers over the affairs of the province of Babylon (**v.12**; cf. Seow, 54, who observes that the Chaldean diviners are provoked both by professional jealousy and xenophobia).

The behavior of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is both an act of **treason** (since they do not serve the king's gods, **v.12**) and **insubordination** (since they refuse to obey the king's edict and bow to the golden image, **v.12**). The display of such disloyalty is deserving of death. Though the rival astrologers do not ask for the execution of three Hebrews, the request is implicit in their reminder to the king of the consequences for failure to comply with his decree (**v.11**).

II. (:13-23) THE SUPREMACY OF GOD DESERVES UNSWERVING LOYALTY REGARDLESS OF THE COST

A. (:13-15) The Loyalty of Men of Faith (in God's Supremacy) Bothers Men of Pride (in Their Own Supremacy)

1. (:13) <u>Proud Rulers Are Angry When Their Supremacy is Challenged</u>

"*Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.*"

- Nebuchadnezzar had so many servants under him, but could not control his own spirit.
- cf. anger of domineering church leaders when opposed in various contexts

2. (:14) <u>Proud Rulers Are Mystified When Confronted with Faith</u>

"*Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, 'Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?'*"

3. (:15a) <u>Proud Rulers Are Bullies at Heart</u>

"*Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe, and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you will not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire;*"

- Nebuchadnezzar had gone to great lengths to organize this event.
- Had prepared for the possibility of non-compliance, but didn't really expect it.
- Satan, the tempter, is quick to give us a second chance and a third ... to see if we will deny the Lord.
- Nebuchadnezzar left the door open for them to **rationalize** their surrender to the king's threats:
    a. "after all he is the king and he has been good to us"
    b. "what's the big deal; why cause any trouble or make waves?"
    c. "it's only this one time"
    d. "we can bow down outwardly, but not really mean it in our hearts"
    e. "what good will it do God if His only testimony gets snuffed out in the fiery furnace (the end justifies the means)"

Stephen Miller: For some reason Nebuchadnezzar was willing to grant these young men an opportunity to change their minds. Possibly he had grown fond of them, or perhaps he felt that it would be a pity to lose three capable men especially since he had made a large investment of time and money in them. The king offered to have the orchestra play just for them. If Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would bow down before the image, all would be well; but if not, they would be thrown immediately (lit., "*in the moment*") into the blazing furnace.

4. (:15b) Proud Rulers Are Arrogant about Their Own Power and Skeptical about the Power of God

"*and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"*

- Blind to the spiritual realm;
- Could not imagine how he could lose this confrontation;
- Could not see the Lord's hosts

B. (:16-18) Idolatry Should Never Be An Option for Those Who Understand the Supremacy of God

1. (:16) No Debate or Indecision – the Issue is Cut and Dried

"*Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.'"*

2. (:17) No Doubt about God's Ability to Save

"*If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.*"

3. (:18) No Dictating of Terms to God

"*But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.*"

- Loyalty is Man's Obligation
- Deliverance is God's Option

Very important that we not try to dictate terms to God or condition our loyalty on any factor other than the Person of God.
We need a vision for the supremacy and majesty of God; our God is too small. Why do empty things, the things of this world, hold any attraction for us?

Iain Duguid: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not presume to predict what the outcome would be in their case. If God were our servant, or our accomplice, he would be predictable: he would always do our bidding. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego understood that since God is sovereign, however, it was his choice whether he opted to be glorified in their deaths or through their dramatic deliverance. Either way, it didn't make a difference to their decision. Whether they were miraculously delivered or left to burn in the fire, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not compromise their commitment to the Lord. Live or die, they would be faithful to their God.

Andrew Hill: Commentators generally agree "that the point being made here is that the youth's primary reason for standing firm is not their confidence that God will deliver them, but their adherence to the first two commandments of the Decalogue. They will not honour any god other than the God of Israel, and they will not worship any idol" (Lucas, 91). Thus the response of the three Hebrews to Nebuchadnezzar is both a confident statement of faith in the God of Israel and a solemn declaration of independence from royal authority. Their bold expression of civil disobedience to the law of the king is not without consequences (cf. Smith-Christopher, 64). Like the apostles of Jesus later in the NT era, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego accept full responsibility for their decision to defy human authority and obey God (cf. **Ac 4:19–20; 5:29**).

C. (:19-23) The Price of Loyalty May Be Intense Persecution – Circumstances May Look Hopeless

1. (:19a) Intensified Wrath of the King

"*Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.*"

He has lost all control; you cannot reason with him.

2. (:19b) Intensified Temperature of the Furnace

"*He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.*"

3. (:20) Involvement of Valiant Warriors

"*And he commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire.*"

Tremper Longman III: Our picture of this furnace is supplied by the description of the text rather than any firm archaeological knowledge. For the narrative to make sense, the furnace must be large. Some scholars have suggested that this is a furnace near the plain of Dura that was used to make the great golden image in the first place. Apparently the three are thrown in from an opening at the top, but Nebuchadnezzar's ability to look into the furnace indicates that perhaps there was a window or opening at the side as well.

4. (:21) Immobilized, Wrapped in Flamable Garments and Cast into the Heart of the Furnace

"*Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire.*"

5. (:22-23) Irony of Two Contrasting Outcomes

a. (:22) Outcome of the Soldiers

"*For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.*"

b. (:23) Outcome of God's Servants

"*But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up.*"

- Picture of submission to the will of God (not putting up any fight);
- You don't always come out of the fire alive (**Heb. 11:36-38**)
- "*the fellowship of His sufferings*" – **Philippians 3:10.**

III. (:24-30) THE SUPREME GOD IS ABLE TO SAVE HIS LOYAL SERVANTS

Key Question: Who is the supreme deliverer?
What god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?

A. (:24-25) The Living God Can Manifest His Presence in the Fiery Furnace

"*Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he responded and said to his high officials, 'Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?' They answered and said to the king, 'Certainly, O king.' 25 He answered and said, 'Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!'*"

Iain Duguid: The question of whether this fourth person is a **Christophany** (a physical appearance of Christ before his incarnation) or merely an angel cannot be resolved from the text, which would fit either instance equally well. In either case, however, it is a physical demonstration of God's presence with believers in their distress. God did not simply rescue his servants from the fire, he sent his personal emissary to pass through the fire with them, a presence that takes richer dimensions in the New Testament, when God comes to dwell physically with us as Immanuel. As a result of his presence with them, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego emerged safely at the end of their time in the furnace.

B. (:26-27) The Most High God Can Deliver His Servants From the Fiery Trial with No Ill Effects – Unbowed and Unburned

> "*Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, 'Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!' Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire. 27 And the satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around and saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them.*"

Iain Duguid: This experience was a fulfillment of the words the Lord had spoken to his people through the prophet Isaiah two centuries earlier: "*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze*" (**Isa. 43:2**). Notice that God didn't promise to take his people around the waters or to keep the fire far from them. On the contrary, tribulation was the anticipated path for God's saints, then and now (see **Acts 14:22**). Trials provide the context in which the faith of believers shines with unmatched clarity before the eyes of a watching world, as **1 Peter 1:6–7** makes clear. It is precisely in the furnace that the reality of our faith is displayed most clearly. Yet, in the midst of those trials and difficulties, the Lord promised that his people could count on **his presence with them**, ensuring that their trials would not utterly overwhelm them. The Lord does not stand far off from his people in need: he has promised to be "*God with us*," Immanuel. As a result, nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love (**Rom. 8:38–39**).

Andrew Hill: The story is that they are with a divine being in the midst of the fire. They encounter divine presence in the middle of the fire. Typical of the ironic twist often found in the biblical narrative, the fire, an **instrument of death** for the Babylonian king, is a **source of life** for the three Hebrews, since fire is one symbol of divine presence for the God of Israel (**Ex 3:2; 13:21; Dt 4:11–12; Ps 18:8**).

Tremper Longman III: In this way, God is showing Nebuchadnezzar **who is in charge**. Even if the image that precipitated the crisis is not of Nebuchadnezzar himself, he has certainly put himself in place of God, insisting that he is the ultimate power of the universe, from whose rage no deity could hope to save a follower. By contrast, it is only

the true God who can proclaim that "*no one can deliver out of my hand*" (**Deut. 32:39**). And this great God was a **proven deliverer**. After all, when he rescued his people from Egypt centuries before, Moses told the Israelites that it was God who "*brought you out of the iron-smelting furnace, out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance, as you now are*" (**4:20**).

C. (:28) The Supreme God Can Glorify Himself as the One Who Delivers His Loyal Servants

> "*Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, 'Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God.'*"

Stephen Miller: Then the pagan monarch expressed his admiration for these young men because of their willingness to defy a king's command and suffer a horrible death in order to remain true to their god. Although angered by their actions, he respected their commitment. Even in today's world unbelievers may not understand or appreciate Christian convictions, but usually they respect those who are willing to take a stand for their God. **Verse 28** confirms that bowing before the statue was considered an act of worship.

D. (:29) Deliverance Can Lead to Enhanced Security for Future Worship

> "*Therefore, I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.*"

E. (:30) Deliverance Can Lead to Overwhelming Prosperity

> "*Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon.*"

Paul Lederach: The story quickly concludes with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego receiving further promotions in the province. This dashes the hopes of certain Chaldeans that the three would be discredited, found disloyal, and removed from public service.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) What principles about proper and improper civil disobedience can we learn from this section?

2) How confident are we of the presence of God with us in the midst of our sufferings and trials? Do we have the false expectation that the Christian life is supposed to be a blank check to help us escape from all sorts of difficulty?

3) Do we have a testimony to our faith in the Supremacy of our God when we are still in the midst of our fiery furnace or do we wait until we have experienced deliverance?

4) How does taking action in the face of fear (instead of being paralyzed by our fear) help us to experience God's grace and sustaining power?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Dan Cormie: **The Fire Alarm** – You Want to be In the Fire:
In the fire:

- You walk with God.
- You gain freedom.
- Your enemies die.

Surrendering self is the key to being in the fire.

Wayne Burnett: (**3:10-18**) **Five Facts about Faith**
FACT #1 (**16** - WE ARE NOT CAREFUL TO ANSWER THEE...)
-We need a faith that cannot be threatened or intimidated by the world, that does not give in to pressure

FACT #2 (**17** - IF IT BE SO...) - We need a faith that can stand up in the face of reality
A. You have the power to cast us into the furnace
B. Our faith needs to face the reality that we may go through the fire.

FACT #3 (**17** - GOD IS ABLE TO DELIVER US FROM THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE) - We need a faith that is always subject to the divine will of God

FACT #4 (**17** - AND WILL DELIVER US OUT OF YOUR HAND...) - We need a faith that knows God will deliver us from the hand of the enemy

FACT #5 (**18** - BUT IF NOT....WE WILL NOT SERVE THY GODS) - We need a faith that will be committed to God regardless of the outcome

Ronald George: **Let God Take a Bite Out of Your Lions**
I recall a story about a man who had to cross a wide river on the ice. He was afraid it might be too thin, so he began to crawl on his hand and knees in great terror. He thought he might fall through at any moment. Just as he neared the opposite shore, all exhausted, another man glided past him nonchalantly sitting on a sled loaded with pig iron.

How like some Christians! Headed for Heaven, they tremble at every step lest the divine promises break under their feet. They need only to look at the context of **Isaiah 12:2** to realize that God is their salvation and the Lord is their strength and song. By resting completely upon Him and taking His promises at face value, we can drive out the paralyzing fear that hinders our effectiveness in serving Christ. The biblical antidote always works: "*I will trust, and not be afraid.*"

What Fears hold you back from serving the Lord as He would want you to?

1. Fear of what others will think, do, or say?
Gal 1:10 "*For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*" Fear of losing our public image before the people that we see every day. They may call you names ...or not look on you favorably. Results in failure to witness, to grow, to become the child God wants us to become. *Fear God not Men...*

2. Fear of Failure. Failure to be successful in the eyes of our peers..(Pride)
What will happen if we are eaten alive by the lions? What if we don't know what to say or do? We may look like a fool. How can anyone ever begin without beginning? What if the Lions eat us and destroy us? Failure isn't final in the Lord. How can you go wrong in God's will?

3. Fear of Change... How can I make it? Will I be able to make it? Afraid we won't be able to make it into the new change. Fear of voluntarily changing our lives. We would rather remain as we are. Remain in the same seats. Remain in the same life instead of allowing God to change us to grow us. Change from the comfortable seat to the lions' den, so don't rock the boat.

How can we overcome the Fears that devour us daily?
1. Stand Firm in what the Lord wants us to do...Continue to serve the Lord or change our lives to become who the Lord wants us to be. Pray, serve, live, be who the Lord wants us to be....

2. Trust in the Lord's promises. Mat 28:20 "*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" Amen. **Phil 4:13** "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*"

3. Continue to go forward in the Lord's Will for your life. Dan 6:16 *Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee*. Step forward today to follow the Lord's Will for your life. If you will go where the Lord wants you to go, go today.

David Derry: **Our God is Able . . . And He Will**
What is faith?

According to what we read earlier in Hebrews 11:1 "*faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*."

A modern day equivalent of this is:
You go to a doctor whose name you can't pronounce. He gives you a prescription you can't read. You take it to a pharmacist you have never met. He gives you medication you do not understand and you take it without thinking twice about it.

Faith involves believing that someone else will do something that is not yet visible or that has not yet happened. Thus, to have faith is to relinquish trust in oneself and to put that trust in another.

Faith is the medium by which the power of God is made visible. Just as an artist may use paint as their medium, or a sculptor uses clay, God works through faith. . .

Many people are like this poem that was written by that great theologian "Dr. Suess"

Did I ever tell you about the young Zoad?
Who came to a sign at the fork of the road
He looked one way and the other way too
The Zoad had to make up his mind what to do
Well, the Zoad scratched his head,
And his chin, and his pants.
And he said to himself, "I'll be taking a chance.
If I go to Place One, that place may be hot
So how will I know if I like it or not.
On the other hand, though, I'll feel such a fool
If I go to Place Two and find it's too cool
In that case I may catch a chill and turn blue.
So Place One may be best and not Place Two.
Play safe," cried the Zoad, "I'll play safe, I'm no dunce.
I'll simply start off to both places at once.
And that's how the Zoad who would not take a chance
Went no place at all with a split in his pants.

Dr. C. David White:
1- All of our enemies, Satan included, want us to be controlled by fear. (miserable and ineffective)
The Collins Dictionary defines fear as a feeling of distress, apprehension, or alarm caused by impending danger, pain, etc. - or to be afraid (to do something) or of (a person or thing).
2- God desires for you to experience an "*abundant life*". (**Jn. 10:10**)
3- Three types of fear: 1- Rational. 2- Irrational. 3- Imaginative.
4- Believers must learn how to act in faith in spite of whatever fear we might have.

Peter Wallace: **The Image and the Son**

You may have heard that the Pope wants to change the Lord's Prayer. Normally I don't comment much on such things, but since our passage deals with the issue so clearly, I thought that I should at least mention it. What you see in **Daniel 3** is the Lord leading Daniel's three friends into temptation and also then delivering them from evil.

There is nothing wrong with saying that God leads us into temptation. After all, in **Matthew 3**, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted! And the Holy Spirit is God. So if God the Holy Spirit led God the Son into the wilderness to be tempted, then we should not be surprised when God leads us into temptation. Indeed, that is the whole point of the petition: "*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*." In other words, we would prefer not to be tempted, but if you do lead us into temptation, then please deliver us.

And that is exactly the point here in **Daniel 3**. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are confident that God is leading them. They have been praying "*Lead us not into temptation*" – but then temptation comes. And that does not cause them to doubt God! Indeed, they trust God to deliver them – but even if he doesn't, they will still obey the LORD their God, even unto death.

Why does God lead us into temptation? Why does he lead us into testing? The apostle Peter tells us in **1 Peter 1:6-7** "*In this [salvation] you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" God leads us into the temptation in order to test the genuineness of our faith. Will we trust him? When we face the fiery trial, will we stand firm?

1. King's Decree: Dedication of the Image (v1-7)

Given the placement of Daniel **chapter 3** – namely, right after **chapter 2** – we are supposed to see a connection: Nebuchadnezzar has had a dream about an image – and Daniel had told him that he was the golden head of the image! So now Nebuchadnezzar makes a golden image for the people to worship. In the first 18 verses we hear about this image 11 times over. In the first 7 verses, we hear six times that Nebuchadnezzar has set up this image. Ninety feet high and nine feet wide – this is a massive image. So you can see how this image is connected to his dream – but this image is not designed to bring honor to Daniel's God. After all, if he wanted to memorialize the God of Daniel, there would have been a little stone next to the image – as if to warn all future kings that their kingdoms cannot endure!

And when you hear the decree of Nebuchadnezzar, you are to hear an echo of the prophet Isaiah. **Isaiah 43** had said, "*Let all the nations gather together…. Let them bring their witnesses…. I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior*." (**43:9-11**) But **Isaiah 43** had also said, "*When you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you*." (**43:2**) But for the rest of the nations, they knew of no

such promises. All they knew was that the Great King commanded their worship! And so **verse 7** tells us that when the music played, everyone bowed down and worshiped. Well, apparently not quite everyone!

2. The Accusation of Rebellion (v8-12)
Because in **verse 8**, certain Chaldeans came and maliciously accused certain Jews. Yes, their accusation is true – but their motives are plainly set on evil. For instance, they accuse Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. What about Daniel? Did Daniel bow? Of course not. But Daniel has "made it" into the rank of the senior advisers – the trusted counselors of the King. To accuse Daniel could backfire! Nebuchadnezzar has taken a liking to Daniel.

Think about how it plays out in the work world today: if the boss plays favorites – then if you accuse one of his favorites of some misdeed, he might punish you for being a tattler. But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Sure, they are friends of Daniel – but these Chaldeans are confident that Daniel cannot protect them. (And, by the way, they seem to be right: Daniel makes no appearance in the chapter.)

So the three friends face a lot of serious pressure to conform: First, it is the King who demands it – Nebuchadnezzar is called "King Nebuchadnezzar" six times in the first 7 verses. But then notice how everyone is doing it – satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, justices, magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces… (and in case you didn't get the whole list in **verse 2**, the whole list is repeated in **verse 3**!). And furthermore, everyone is doing it at the same time – when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music… (and you hear repeated that in **verse 5, 7, 10 and 15**).

But as you hear this story, do any of you feel the slightest temptation to yield to this pressure? No? Why not? Well, the story is told with a good measure of the absurd thrown in. Think about it. **Verse 1** – King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold. **Verse 15** – the King demands that they worship the image "*that I have made*" And for that matter, the other main verb for this image is "*set up*" – a man has made an image and set it up – it's a "set up job" (as one writer puts it, Davis, 53) "The writer is telling you that it's no more divine than your knee replacement" (Davis 53) There is a healthy dose of sarcasm and mockery in the way that the story is written. "The repeated lists of officials (mimicking the bombast of government missives) and the lists of instruments (mimicking the lavishness of court liturgical language) bring across the point that self-worship in the end is silly in its self-importance, banal in its evil." (Sumner, 138) But it is only absurd to those who have eyes to see. For most people, "hey, he's the king! If he wants us to bow, we'll bow!" Be careful! Because that is the way the city of man works! If you want to get ahead in Babylon – you have to learn the system – you have to learn to play by the rules! But the Christian cannot play by certain rules!

3. Royal Rage (v13-15)
Here in **verses 13-15**, we see clearly these two cities coming into view. Augustine spoke of the two cities in The City of God. "There run throughout human history two

cities, which is to say, two movements, two principles, two loves… And where there are two loves there are naturally two worships… the ultimate expression of the direction and commitment of our heart and mind." (Sumner, 137) And the city of man is intractably opposed to the City of God. The ancient world was very pluralistic – in one sense – you can worship whatever you like – so long as you bow the knee to the King (and whatever god he serves!).

Modern pluralism is no different. You can worship whoever and whatever you like – so long as you bow the knee to modern pluralism! In the 20th century Lenin's statue dominated Russia – and Chairman Mao's statue dominated China. It is tempting at times to say that Christians simply cannot get involved in politics – but then you have Daniel and his friends – they remain very involved in Babylonian and Persian politics! But the key is that they remain faithful to the Great Commandment: *you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart!* You simply may not bow to any other god – any other image!

4. The Answer: (v16-18)
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego only speak once in the whole story. Indeed, this is the only time that they speak in the whole book of Daniel. But this one line is enough! The response of the three friends is remarkable. It would have been easy to compromise. It would have been easy to say, "Hey, I won't mean it in my heart, I'll just go through the outward motions. What good will it do for our people, if we are fried to a crisp?" But instead they respond with a clear rejection of the King's demands.

The translation of **verse 17** has perplexed many. The footnote in the ESV provides one rendering: "*If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, he will deliver us*…" But most commentators have agreed that this makes no sense in the context of the book of Daniel! Dale Ralph Davis argues for a slightly different translation of **verse 17**: "*If our God exists whom we are serving, he is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace – and from your hand, O king, he can deliver*." They are not doubting God's existence. Rather, they are challenging Nebuchadnezzar's unbelief.

But they also recognize that they do not know what God's purposes are. He is able to deliver us from your hand – but whether he will or not, we will still not serve your gods or worship the golden image. But however you translate it, there is a clear distinction between their uncertainty over whether God will save them, and their conviction that whether he does or not, they will not bow. In other words, they know God's revealed will – as found in the 2nd commandment: "*you shall not make graven images – you shall not bow down and worship them*" And so, whether or not God rescues us in this situation, we will not obey you. That takes courage!

Have you ever wondered how you would do if they came for you? Sinclair Ferguson says it well, "Faith means trusting in God and His Word. Faith does not mean that we either know or understand what his specific purpose in our lives may be. It means a ready willingness to follow Him whatever His purpose." In one way, the real miracle is found here in **verses 16-18**. That these three friends would stand firm before the

greatest King on earth – knowing that their stand would likely cost them their life – that is the greatest miracle in our chapter. What really matters to you?

3. Royal Rage: the Verdict, Part 1 (v19-23)
Notice that **verse 19** parallels **verse 13**. "*in furious rage*" from **verse 13** is now echoed in "*filled with fury*." In this way, Nebuchadnezzar fits the stereotype of the ancient figure of the Great King, who always expects his every wish to be performed. "The overheated state of the ruler is reflected in the overheated state of the oven. Both are out of control and kill their own." (Sumner, 141) But, if we are honest, how often is this true of us? When we expect someone to do what we say, and then they don't do it – we often get upset. Of course, Nebuchadnezzar is the Great King of Babylon – so who is going to tell him, "No!"? And especially consider who Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are: they are minor bureaucrats – foreigners, to boot, with no influence and no powerful backers to protect them.

And so Nebuchadnezzar orders the fire stoked seven times hotter! He wants these men to be instantly incinerated! Indeed, so hot is the fire, that the mighty men who threw them in the flames were themselves overcome by the heat before they could throw them. (The picture is of the mighty men, standing at the edge of the furnace, ready to throw the three friends into the furnace – but being overcome by the heat and the flames, so that they drop their burdens, and so the three friends just sort of tumble and roll into the furnace instead). But notice the contrast: Nebuchadnezzar's servants perish in the flames. God's servants do not!

2. The Deliverance by the Son (v24-27)
Much ink has been spilt trying to determine the identity of the fourth man! The author does not tell us who this is. The only witness is Nebuchadnezzar, who says that the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods – or perhaps a Son of God (the Aramaic could be read either way). We do not need to know exactly who it was. Was it the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity? Maybe. If you think about the conclusion of the Aramaic section in **chapter 7**, you see the one like a Son of Man – who is most likely the same one whom Nebuchadnezzar sees here.

It is worth reflecting on Jesus' words, "*where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them*" (**Matthew 18:20**). What we need to know is this: Nebuchadnezzar was right to identify the savior as the Son of God. Jesus is the one who visits his people in the midst of their afflictions and sufferings. He is the image of the invisible God – the one who comforts us in our distress and rescues us from all our foes.

(:26-27) -- Such is the power of God that not a hair on their heads was signed – no smell of fire or smoke has tainted them. *When you walk through the fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior*." (**Isaiah 43:2-3**)

1. King's Decree: Vindication (v28-30)
The chapter began with a decree to all "*peoples, nations, and languages*" – that they

should worship the image. Now there is a decree to all "people, nations, or languages" that they should not speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. I realize that we are only in **chapter 3** – but I need to give you a hint of what is coming: (of course, those of you who have sung Andrew Deliyannides' "I Saw the Son of Man" already have this line running through your head: "*I saw the Son of Man stand before the Ancient of Days where he was given: glory, and a kingdom, and dominion that all peoples and nations and languages should serve him*.") That's from **Daniel 7** – where Daniel sees a vision that ties together all that these first 6 chapters show us.

Here in **chapter 3**, Nebuchadnezzar has commanded the peoples, nations, and languages to bow before his image. But in **chapter 7**, it will be the Son of Man who will be given glory and a kingdom. Notice that in **verse 29**, Nebuchadnezzar answers his own question from **verse 15** – "*who is the god who will deliver you out of my hand?*" Well, the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is the God who is able to rescue in this way! But Nebuchadnezzar stops short of actually worshiping this God. Nebuchadnezzar is a polytheist. He believes in many gods. He is impressed with the God of Daniel's friends, but not enough to set aside his other gods! In this case, God rescued his people from the flames. But there are times when God does not rescue us. There are times when we must still endure the trials.

Dale Ralph Davis tells the story of a KGB agent who was sent to a Russian church to enforce submission to the Soviet government during Stalin's era. This KGB agent saw an old woman kissing the feet of an icon of Jesus. He said, "Babushka, are you also prepared to kiss the feet of the beloved general secretary of our great Communist Party?" She quickly shot back, "Why of course! But only if you crucify him first!"

Who will you worship? The only God worth worshiping is a God who not only meets his people in the midst of the fire – he comes and takes the fire upon himself. He was crucified for us – so that we might live through him. And because he has endured the fire of God's wrath, we now experience the fire as those who are refined like gold – that we might be purified and made like him!

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **Faith in the Furnace**
Introduction: The three Hebrew children, as we're going to see as we look into this story, they did not operate on the popular notion that faith is exceptional confidence in popular outcomes. Biblical faith is not confidence in popular outcomes. Biblical faith is confidence and trust in an all-wise and sovereign God, and learning to trust in Him no matter what.

Big Idea: **Faith is not believing in spite of circumstances, it is obeying in spite of consequences.**

I. Faith honors God in spite of difficult circumstances
A. The King's Arrogance
The idea of him just having a passing place on the center stage of history didn't sit well with him (cf. image of **chap. 2**). I think he wanted for his kingdom to endure, and I

think that's what this image represented. But it would really be nice if I were the whole statue. Why should my kingdom be so succeeded by other kingdoms? Why shouldn't this great statue that I have built last forever?

It reminds me of the poem Invictus, the words of the poem that said, *I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul.* And so this image, we could say, is the Invictus statement of King Nebuchadnezzar.

B. The Chaldeans' Accusation – 3:8

I think they didn't like these Jewish leaders anyway that were set up at certain strategic positions in the Empire of Babylon. I think that they didn't like them anyway and here was an opportunity for them to bring an accusation against them. The word accused here, literally, it's a very strong word suggesting severe hatred, literally to eat up, you know, to relish with great hatred the idea that they had something against them. And they bring this because they saw that the three Hebrews refused to bow.

C. The Hebrews' Answer – 3:16

They would not worship other gods. That was strictly forbidden in the Old Testament Scripture. They would be violating with the Word of God. They would be compromising their convictions, what they believe.

Here they affirm the power of God. Our God is able. There's no question in our mind. We know He's able. You know what faith is? Faith believes that God is powerful. God can do whatever he wants to do. There's no difficulty or circumstance that God can't deliver you out of. And so faith believes in the power of God.

II. Faith Obeys God in Spite of Dangerous Circumstances

Practical Lessons:

1) The proper response to God's sovereignty is humble submission.
2) Those who choose to live by their convictions must count the cost.
3) Faith is not believing in spite of circumstances, but rather it's obeying in spite of consequences.
4) God did not promise to deliver you from the furnace, but that he would be with you in the furnace.
5) God uses the furnace to purify his people. Again, they came out of that furnace unbound.
6) God uses the furnace to reveal himself to us in a greater way.

TEXT: Daniel 4:1-37

TITLE: WHO'S IN CHARGE?

BIG IDEA:
THE MOST HIGH IS RULER OVER THE REALM OF MANKIND AND BESTOWS AUTHORITY ON WHOMEVER HE WISHES

INTRODUCTION:
Power Struggles can be quite dramatic. They take place all the time in the political realm. But when the highest authority on earth enters into a power struggle with the Majestic God, it is no contest. God stomps all over the boastful pride of any human ruler who tries to take credit and the glory for his position of power and authority or the accomplishments of his administration. The lesson can be quite painful as it was in the historical case of King Nebuchadnezzar.

Walvoord: the contest between God and Nebuchadnezzar is a broad illustration of God's dealings with the entire human race and especially the Gentile world in its creaturely pride and failure to recognize the sovereignty of God.

John Goldingay: The chapter concerns the question of **who is king**, but by its form it gives us the answer before we begin. OT narrative, psalmody, and prophecy elsewhere speak of nations and kings once acknowledging God, challenged to acknowledge him, and destined to acknowledge him. Nebuchadnezzar makes this acknowledgment, in the present, in the history of this age. Whereas often it does not seem that God rules in history, occasional yet momentous events whose memory the Scriptures preserve give the grounds and the periodic reinforcement for the conviction that he does rule. The author of Daniel affirms that conviction of faith for himself and for his readers as he puts it on the lips of the great Nebuchadnezzar.

Andrew Hill: Redditt, 75–76, adapts Shea's chiastically structured outline of **ch. 4** and offers a more comprehensive schematic of the narrative:

Prologue. Proclamation. Doxology 1 (**4:1–3**)

Dream reception by the king (**4:4–6**)
Instructions: King to Daniel (**4:7–9**)
Dream recital: King to Daniel (**4:10–17**)
Dialogue: King and Daniel (**4:18–19**)
Dream interpretation: Daniel to the king (**4:20–26**)
Instructions: Daniel to the king (**4:27**)
Dream fulfillment upon the king (**4:28–33**)

Epilogue. Restoration. Doxology 2 (**4:34–37**)

THE MOST HIGH IS RULER OVER THE REALM OF MANKIND AND BESTOWS AUTHORITY ON WHOMEVER HE WISHES

(:1-3) PROLOGUE: ROYAL DECREE = PRAISE FOR GOD'S EVERLASTING DOMINION

A. (:1) Greeting From King Nebuchadnezzar

"*Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: 'May your peace abound!'*"

B. (:2-3) Testimony Praising God

1. Testimony of God's Personal Intervention and Provision

"*It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me.*"

Bruce Hurt: *Signs and wonders* – This is a familiar idiom in Scripture (18x in the OT = **Ex 7:3, Dt 4:34, 6:22, 7:19, 13:1, 13:2, 26:8, 28:46, 29:3, 34:11 Neh 9:10 Ps 135:9 Isa 8:18 Jer 32:20 32:21 Da 4:2 4:3 6:27**) (16x in NT = **Mt 24:24; Mk 13:22; Jn 4:48; Acts 2:19, 22, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36; 14:3; 15:12; Ro 15:19; 2Cor 12:12; 2Th 2:9; Heb 2:4**)

Stephen Miller: The **purpose of the letter** is set forth in **v. 2**, namely, to tell of the greatness and power of the "*Most High God*" (the God of Israel) that had been exhibited in Nebuchadnezzar's life. Emphasis is placed on God's "*miraculous signs and wonders*" by the word order, the terms being positioned first in the Aramaic. Both "*signs*" and "*wonders*" describe miraculous manifestations (cf. **6:27**) and occur again in the next verse. Yahweh had employed miracles in order to demonstrate his reality and power to Nebuchadnezzar. Not only the earlier fiery furnace episode, but even the experience related in this account was a wondrous sign to the king.

"*It is my pleasure*" shows that it was a true joy for the king to share what God had done in his life—delivered him from madness. This should be the attitude of any believer. If God has done something wonderful, an individual should be delighted to share that experience with others.

John Goldingay: The king's confession of God's greatness (**vv. 2–3**) marks a transition to something like a thanksgiving or testimony (e.g., **Ps 30**), in which a person recalls how their life was going well, how it went wrong, but how God then restored them; the closing verses resume the form of a testimony. More specifically, it parallels the less usual kind of testimony psalm that speaks of the suppliant's wrongdoing, of God's chastising, and then of God's restoring (e.g., **Ps 32**).

2. Testimony of God's Power

"*How great are His signs*
And how mighty are His wonders!"

3. Testimony of God's Permanence and Dominion

"*His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom*
And His dominion is from generation to generation."

Bruce Hurt: First, this is his royal proclamation, his personal witness of the saving hand of the Most High God. This is Nebuchadnezzar's "Tract" if you will, of his personal encounter with the one true and living High God. And He's not only the God of one nation or one people, but He is also the Lord God, the mighty Sovereign and King of all the nations and of all the peoples of the world.

I. (4-18) THE DREAM

A. (:4-5) Disturbing Nature of the Dream

"*I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace. I saw a dream and it made me fearful; and these fantasies as I lay on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me.*"

Wiersbe: Nebuchadnezzar was now enjoying a time of peace and security. After defeating all his enemies and completing several impressive building projects, he was able at last to rest at home and delight in what had been accomplished. Nebuchadnezzar thought that he was the builder of "*Babylon the great*" and the architect of hits peace and prosperity, but he was soon to learn that all these things had been permitted by the will of the Most High God.

B. (:6-9) Different Options for Interpretation

1. (:6-7) Option #1 = Secular Babylonian Sources

" *So I gave orders to bring into my presence all the wise men of Babylon, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. Then the magicians, the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners came in and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its interpretation known to me.*"

2. (:8-9) Option #2 =Spiritual Connection to the Holy Gods = Daniel / Belteshazzar

"*But finally Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god, and in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and I related the dream to him, saying, 'O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, since I know that a spirit of the holy gods is in you and no mystery baffles you, tell me the visions of my dream which I have seen, along with its interpretation.'*"

C. (:10-17) Details of the Dream

1. (:10-12) Huge Tree

a. **(:10)** Prominent Tree

"*Now these were the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed: I was*

looking, and behold, there was a tree in the midst of the earth and its height was great."

b. (**:11**) Powerful Tree

"*The tree grew large and became strong*
And its height reached to the sky,
And it was visible to the end of the whole earth."

Gleason Archer Jr.: The portrayal of man in his pride as a lofty tree is a familiar OT symbol: "*The Lord Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty . . .* (and they will be humbled), *for all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty, and all the oaks of Bashan*" (**Isa 2:12-13; cf. Isa 10:34**). In 587 B.C., just a few years before King Nebuchadnezzar had this dream, Ezekiel had used a similar figure in describing the pride and fall of Assyria (Ezek 31:3-17).

Guzik: The tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was noted for its size, strength, prominence, beauty, fruit, and shelter.

c. (:**12**) Productive Tree

"*Its foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant,*
And in it was food for all.
The beasts of the field found shade under it,
And the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches,
And all living creatures fed themselves from it."

2. (:13-16) Holy Messenger

a. (:**13**) Message From Heaven

"*I was looking in the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed, and behold, an angelic watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven.*"

b. (:**14**) Message of Stripping Away All Dominion

"*He shouted out and spoke as follows:*
'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,
Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit;
Let the beasts flee from under it
And the birds from its branches.'"

c. (:**15-16**) Message of Being Reduced to Animal Existence

"*Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground,*
But with a band of iron and bronze around it
In the new grass of the field;
And let him be drenched with the dew of heaven,
And let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth.
Let his mind be changed from that of a man
And let a beast's mind be given to him,
And let seven periods of time pass over him."

Wiersbe: The banding of the stump may suggest that he was marked by God and protected by Him until His purposes for him were fulfilled.

Stephen Miller: The stump is to be "*bound with iron and bronze*," which means that a strong band or fence was to be placed around the stump of the tree in order to protect it from destruction. **Verses 23** and **26** demonstrate that this metal band is symbolic of the preservation of Nebuchadnezzar's life and kingdom.

Bruce Hurt: This is one of the more enigmatic aspects of this description and commentaries offer a wide range of interpretation. Some see the band as figurative allusion to the king's being bound by mental illness. Others see it as a sign that the stump would be protected thus assuring its survival.

3. (:17) Humbling Lesson

"*This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers*
And the decision is a command of the holy ones,
In order that the living may know
That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind,
And bestows it on whom He wishes
And sets over it the lowliest of men."

D. (:18) Demand that Daniel Provide the Interpretation

"*This is the dream which I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, tell me its interpretation, inasmuch as none of the wise men of my kingdom is able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you.*"

Andrew Hill: The king's confidence in Daniel's ability to interpret the dream (**v.18**) stems from both his previous experience with the Hebrew captives' unraveling of his dream of the giant statue (**ch. 2**) and the recognition that Daniel is uniquely endowed with some sort of divine spirit that permits him to penetrate the mysterious interface of the human psyche and divine revelation with respect to dreams and visions (**vv.8–9**, **18**).

II. (19-27) THE INTERPRETATION

A. (:19) Appalling Nature of the Interpretation

"*Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. The king responded and said, 'Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you.' Belteshazzar replied, 'My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries!'*"

Appalling = Causing shock or dismay; horrific

John Goldingay: Daniel invites readers to care about people in power, even people who abuse power, to appeal to their humanness not their sinfulness, and to treat them as people given a responsibility by God and people who may respond to an appeal to right and wrong.

B. (:20-22) Interpretation of the Huge Tree = King Nebuchadnezzar

"*The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth 21 and whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged— 22 it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth.*"

C. (:23-26) Interpretation of the Holy Messenger and the Humbling Lesson

"*In that the king saw an angelic watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, 'Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him,' 24 this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: 25 that you be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes. 26 And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules.*"

D. (:27) Application and Counsel

"*Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.*"

Gleason Archer Jr.: Daniel needed real courage to inform his royal master that his rule was marred by the sin of oppression and callousness toward the poor and disadvantaged among his people. Daniel's candor might have cost him his high office or even his life. But apparently Nebuchadnezzar was so intimidated by the dream as to feel that he had better do everything possible to placate the displeasure of the Almighty.

Specifically Daniel urged Nebuchadnezzar to adopt <u>two new policies</u>:

(1) to reexamine his conduct in the light of the moral law (understanding it as binding on him as on his subjects, even though as their sovereign he was immune to prosecution);

(2) to show a new sensitivity to the plight of the poor in his empire, protecting them instead of allowing the rich to exploit and oppress them.

Iain Duguid: The somber fate depicted for King Nebuchadnezzar in the dream was not inevitable, though. The purpose of the dream was to provide Nebuchadnezzar with a warning shot across his bow, so that he might repent of his pride. He could demonstrate that repentance by doing what was right and showing concern for the oppressed.

III. (28-33) THE HISTORICAL FULFILLMENT

A. (:28) Summary Statement

"*All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king.*"

B. (:29-30) Situation = Consumed with Pride

"*Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'*"

Dwight Pentecost: God endured Nebuchadnezzar's pride for 12 months. This may have been a period of grace in which God was giving Nebuchadnezzar an opportunity to turn to Him in repentance. But when Nebuchadnezzar ignored Daniel's exhortation God, who had given Nebuchadnezzar his authority, announced the interruption of his rule.

Iain Duguid: It is worth noticing where Nebuchadnezzar's eyes are directed at the beginning and end of his time of judgment. At the beginning of the episode he is on a lofty perch, the rooftop of his house, from where his eyes roam sideways and downwards, comparing his glory to that of other men and glorifying himself. He thought of himself as the center of the universe, the tree from which everything else receives its sustenance. This is exactly what pride does: it locates the self at the center of the universe, glorying in its own achievements, and putting everyone else in second place. Its eyes are always directed sideways and downwards, comparing ourselves with others, and endlessly trying to outdo them. In its very nature, pride has to be cleverer than someone else, or more attractive than other people, or a better cook, or a faster runner, or a more skillful gardener, or whatever. Pride is never satisfied in what has been accomplished because its essence always lies in defeating others, not in achieving the thing itself. The eyes of pride are thus always fixed on myself and my performance, in a way that leaves no room for looking upwards to God.

C. (31-32) Sovereignty = the Issue

"*While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, 32 and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that*

the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes."

Gleason Archer Jr.: This tremendously important principle had to be established in the minds of the captive Jews, serving out their years of bondage in Babylonia. They might well have wondered whether the God of Abraham, Moss, and Elijah was truly alive and able to stand before the triumphant Gentile nations that had reduced his holy city, Jerusalem, to rubble and his holy temple to ashes. It would have been easy for them to conclude, as all the pagan observers assumed, that the Hebrew nation had been so completely crushed and uprooted from their native land because their God was too weak to defend them from the might of the gods of Babylon: Marduk, Nebo, and Bel. True, the warnings in **Leviticus 26** and **Deuteronomy 28** back in Moses' day had been very clear that Yahweh would cast his people out of the Land of Promise should they ever prove unfaithful. But now they needed some definite demonstration that their Lord was the true and living God and that all the gods of the pagans were only idols. They needed a series of striking miracles to sustain their flagging faith and renew their waning courage as they waited for their deliverance from exile. The captive Jews needed to know that even the apparently limitless power of Nebuchadnezzar was under the control of the Lord God Almighty, who still cared for them and had a great future for them in their land. Therefore, each episode recorded in the first six chapters concludes with a triumphant demonstration of God's sovereignty and faithfulness and his ability to crush the pride of unconverted mankind.

D. (:33) Shocking Fulfillment

"*Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.*"

IV. (:34-37) THE LESSON LEARNED

A. (:34) Lesson Learned – Praise for God's Sovereignty and Everlasting Dominion

"*But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation.*"

B. (:35) Inability of Man to Thwart or Even Question God's Purposes

"*All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,*
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven
And among the inhabitants of earth;
And no one can ward off His hand
Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"

C. (:36) Restoration and Exaltation of Nebuchadnezzar's Reign

"*At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me.*"

John Goldingay: The restoration of Nebuchadnezzar's human understanding and his resuming an ordinary human life is introductory to the restoration of his power: once again, the story is about his **power**, not merely about what happens to him as a human being. Similarly, Nebuchadnezzar is portrayed as moving, not from the worship of Marduk to that of Yahweh (contrast 2 Macc 9:17) but from a sole acknowledgment of his own kingship to an acknowledgment of God's kingship (**v. 37**). "*King of the heavens*" is another expression unique in the OT (though cf. 1 Esd 4:46, 58; Tob 13:7, 11; and for similar expressions, **Dan 5:23; Jer 7:18; 44:17–19**). Here its significance is to bring together at the climax of the chapter its two key motifs, **kingship** and **the heavens**.

D. (:37) Lesson Learned – Praise for God's Sovereignty, Justice and Humbling of the Proud

"*Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.*"

Stephen Miller: In the latter part of the chapter's final verse, the **moral lesson** of the story is presented, "*And those who walk in pride he is able to humble*." This episode illustrates the well-known proverb, "*Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall*" (**Prov 16:18**). The king had learned a painful lesson. God hates pride and humbles those who will not acknowledge his sovereignty over them. Persons who walk in pride today discover that this cause-and-effect spiritual law continues to operate.

Nebuchadnezzar certainly had an encounter with the living God, and his praise seems sincere. Was this experience equivalent to salvation, or did it fall short of saving faith? Wood, Young, Luck, Rushdoony, and Walvoord believe that the king had a genuine salvation experience; but others, including Calvin, Keil, Pusey, and Archer, think that the king's faith fell short. One cannot be dogmatic, but the language of the text suggests that Nebuchadnezzar did in fact have a **saving encounter** with the true God.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Do you think Nebuchadnezzar was genuinely converted? What a remarkable testimony from such a powerful world figure!

2) Where do we take credit for achievements rather than giving God the glory?

3) How can we better testify to others of God's Goodness, Sovereignty and Justice?

4) How can we humble ourselves so that we do not need God to dramatically intervene and humble us?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Walvoord: In **chapter 4** Nebuchadnezzar reaches a new spiritual perspicacity. Prior to his experience of insanity, his confessions were those of a pagan whose polytheism permitted the addition of new gods, as illustrated in **Daniel 2:47** and **3:28-29**. Now Nebuchadnezzar apparently worships the King of heaven only. For this reason, his autobiography is truly remarkable and reflects the fruitfulness of Daniel's influence upon him and probably of Daniel's daily prayers for him. Certainly God is no respecter of persons and can save the high and mighty in this world as well as the lowly.

Wiersbe: Nebuchadnezzar's second dream accomplished three things:

- it warned the king that his pride would lead to judgment (**Da 4:37; Prov. 16:18**);
- it exposed the incompetence of his magicians (**Da 4:6, 7**);
- and it gave Daniel another opportunity to glorify the God of heaven.

Bruce Hurt: Some of the warning signs of a **proud heart** are:

- Usually thinks that he is right.
- Easily offended.
- Does not like to be corrected.
- Often complains about circumstances or people.
- Usually ungrateful.
- Often impatient with others and sometimes with God.
- Not afraid of temptations.
- Secretly ashamed of serving Christ.
- Likes to talk more than listen; freely offers opinions.
- Desires to be first or best.
- Needs to be noticed.
- Obstinate towards authority.
- Quick to find fault with others.

- Bold to contradict others.
- Demanding and hard to please.
- Much more sensitive to personal desires than to the needs of others.
- Boasts about achievements.
- Lives beyond his means.
- Has a hard time forgiving others.
- Pride makes people covetous, liars, flatterers, hypocrites, men-pleasers, and contentious.

Peter Wallace: **The Kingdom of God**
There is actually a medical term for Nebuchadnezzar's condition. It is called "boanthropy" – a term that means "a person who thinks that he is a cow." Once upon a time (way back in the rationalist 20th century) commentators had to assure readers that such things really can happen. But in our day of identity politics, we are not surprised anymore when someone has some sort of "body dysmorphia" and they think that they are (or should be) someone or something else!

Of course, in the ancient world, there are all sorts of stories like this – suggesting that such afflictions have always been with us – they have just been interpreted and explained in all sorts of different ways. There is no other record of Nebuchadnezzar's madness – but then again, ancient kings tended not to appreciate negative publicity – and even after his death, Nebuchadnezzar remained a powerful and influential symbol, so it is not surprising that no other record remains.

The central theme of this chapter is found in the "refrain" as it were, in verses **17, 25, and 32**: "*the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.*" The book of Daniel is not concerned with the question of an abstract "right" to rule, but rather with who is the de facto ruler of a given territory. To put it simply, God has given the United States to Donald Trump. And he has given Russia to Vladimir Putin. And he has given North Korea to Kim Jong-il. And he has given South Bend to Pete Buttigieg. Whether a ruler comes by election, conquest, or any other method – God is the one who rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.

1. "His Kingdom Is an Everlasting Kingdom" – The Proclamation (v1-3)
Verses **1-3** serve as a prelude to the story. Nebuchadnezzar himself issues a proclamation acknowledging the mighty deeds of the Most High God.

2. "The Most High Rules the Kingdom of Men" – The Dream (v4-18)
We saw a couple weeks ago that in the first dream (in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign) the king refused to tell the wise men the dream – but insisted that they tell him what he had dreamed – and then explain the dream. Now we are further into Nebuchadnezzar's reign. There is no nervousness in the King – at least

regarding the wise men. They are now fully under his control! And that's the problem! Because from the dream (as we hear it in the next few verses) it is pretty obvious what the dream means! If you think about the standards of "dream interpretation" in ancient Babylon, it doesn't take much to figure out that this dream is bad news for Nebuchadnezzar. The failure of the magicians was not due to the particular difficulty of the dream – but owed more to their fear of the king's wrath (since they would know that he would be furious!).

And so finally Daniel comes in. You might think, if Daniel is so good at interpreting dreams, why not call for Daniel first?! Nebuchadnezzar reigned for 40 years. We only know of two dreams that Daniel interpreted for him. We tend to think of Daniel as this amazing interpreter – but we have only these two moments in 40 years when Daniel ever appeared before Nebuchadnezzar. Some have said that if Daniel was so great – we should have heard about him from the Babylonian records. But if you read the book of Daniel carefully (and especially if you read it in the light of its ancient context) Daniel is revealed as an obscure magician who was greatly honored twice in 40 years.

(:8) - *At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.* Notice that Nebuchadnezzar is still a thorough-going pagan. He highlights the name of Bel – the name of "my god" – and he speaks of the spirit in Daniel as the spirit of the holy gods. Even in the act of praising the God of Daniel, he is still a polytheist.

Verse 9 likewise speaks of Daniel as "*chief of the magicians*." That is an interesting title for a Christian! But it is essential for us to remember that the Christian is called to seek the welfare of the city where he lives (**Jeremiah 29**). The Christian is not a revolutionary – but a reformer. The Christian does not seek to overthrow the rulers of this age – but to serve them and honor them in such a way as to help them to rule better and longer.

(:10-12) - And so Nebuchadnezzar describes the dream. The vision of the tree that reached up to heaven and whose branches spread over all the earth echoes **Ezekiel 31** (where Pharaoh is the great tree), and **Ezekiel 17** (where the king of Jerusalem is a smaller tree!). This same language is used in **Psalm 80** – "*you brought a vine from Egypt and planted it in the land*…" – **Psalm 80** is also from the time of the Exile (since the song talks about how the vine was "uprooted") This may suggest that Daniel himself was the scribe who composed Nebuchadnezzar's letter. (Given that ancient kings regularly relied upon scribes to compose official letters, you can easily imagine Nebuchadnezzar ordering Daniel to write a letter for him! Which would also explain why the only copy of the letter we possess comes from the Jews!)

Verses 13-17 then give the beginning of the interpretation! The dream itself contains all that is needed for a right understanding of it! **Verse 17** then adds the source of the dream: *17 The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.*' Who are "the

watchers," "the holy ones"? Most commentators simply call them "angels," but "angel" is simply a transliteration of a Greek word that means "messenger."

Paul seems to indicate that there are various orders of heavenly beings – principalities and powers – thrones and dominions – and "angel" or "messenger" would seem to be one of the lower orders. The watchers – the holy ones – would seem to be a higher order. But here in the dream itself, we see that the dream is not directly from God. The dream is from the "watchers" – the "holy ones." They speak on behalf of God. (Later Daniel will say that this is a "decree of the Most High"). But God chooses not to speak directly to a pagan king. He uses intermediaries – the "watchers" – to communicate his decree.

What should we make of this? Have you ever had a dream that really frightened you? How should you interpret dreams? Most dreams are just ordinary dreams. But as we saw this morning from **Psalm 104,** God rules over all things – even your dreams! So how should you interpret your dreams?! Well, think about Nebuchadnezzar's dreams. What action is called for in his dream? Humble yourself and submit to God. Practice righteousness and show mercy to the oppressed. In other words, there is no "new revelation" here. The dream simply confirms all that God has said in his word – and warns that God will judge those who refuse. I've had dreams like that! The part that is unique to Nebuchadnezzar is the specific penalty. (And I would be wary of trusting such specifics today. Daniel had a specific role in redemptive history, and he was specifically gifted in the interpretation of dreams). So the simple way to put it is that insofar as your dreams are calling you to humble yourself and do righteousness and show mercy to the oppressed, you should understand that God is using your dreams to call you to repentance. But dreams are not inherently trustworthy. Dreams and visions can point in all sorts of different directions – some may come purely from our own minds – while others may have demonic sources. So it is best to think of dreams in the way that you think of the news media – as a source of information – more or less reliable – sometimes accurate, and sometimes producing "fake news." (I have certainly had dreams that were "fake news"!) Dreams are never to be used as the determinative guide to action. Notice the adjective: determinative. The infallible guide for action is the Word of God. All sorts of information may be used as supplementary guides. But only the Word of God is the infallible guide.

Scripture gives us a really good example in **Acts 16**. Paul is looking for the next place to go and preach the gospel. We are told in **Acts 16:7** that the "*Spirit of Jesus did not allow them*" to go into Bithynia. (I will admit that it is a little frustrating not to have more information here! What does it mean that the "Spirit of Jesus did not allow them"!?) But however he did it, the Spirit made it clear that going to Bithynia was not an option. So Paul and Silas and Timothy are looking for a place to go and preach the gospel. And in the night, Paul has a vision of a man of Macedonia saying, "*Come over to Macedonia and help us.*" Notice that the vision occurs in the context of Paul's attempt to identify his next mission field. He has been praying – asking God for direction – and in that context, he has a vision that directs him in his path – a path that

was already set in the context of the prophets and teachers in the church in Antioch (**Acts 13**).

So to put this in a modern context, if someone who had never thought about being a missionary came to me and said, "God told me in a dream that he wants me to leave tomorrow to be a missionary to Tibet" – I would be skeptical. (Sort of like the guy who tells a girl: "God told me that you are supposed to marry me.") God is not a cosmic fortune teller who goes around putting wild fancies in people's heads! He certainly might use such a dream to knock some sense into a young person's head – but even Barnabas and Saul were required to go through the ordinary process of being called and set apart by the church. So if someone who was preparing to be a missionary came to me after much prayer, and said, I had a dream about a Tibetan Buddhist monk putting his faith in Christ – I would take very seriously his pursuit of doing missions there. Like I said earlier – dreams are not definitive guides – they are simply "news" – information to be tossed in the hopper along with all the rest, and then subordinated to the Word of God which must direct our paths!

And particularly, since *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*, we should recognize that a decisive corner has been turned in redemptive history. **Hebrews 1** – which we read this morning – says that *in times past, God spoke to our fathers in various ways, but in these last days, God has spoken by his Son.* In other words, we shouldn't expect the old ways to continue.

3. "It Is You, O King" – The Interpretation (v19-27)
Daniel immediately understands what the dream means – and he recognizes (just like the wise men of Babylon) that Nebuchadnezzar is not going to like the interpretation. But unlike the wise men of Babylon, Daniel is not driven by the fear of man. This is the key for the Christian who serves in the courts of kings – or even for the Christian who serves in middle-level management! Daniel is not worried about his own reputation – his own position. He serves the LORD God of heaven and earth. And therefore, he serves Nebuchadnezzar – the pagan king – wisely and faithfully. He wants Nebuchadnezzar to rule well – and long. Sure, in one sense, Daniel would long for the Son of David to sit on the throne – but that is with respect to the City of God. Daniel also resides in the city of Man. And Nebuchadnezzar is the King of Babylon – the epicenter of the city of Man. For Daniel to be faithful in his duties as a servant of God Most High, he must help Nebuchadnezzar to become the best king he can possibly be.

You must help your boss to become the best boss that he can possibly be! How can you help your boss establish a righteous and just community at work? If you are not helping your boss do justice – if you are just serving your time and "doing your job" – then you are more like the Chaldeans than you are like Daniel! (Incidentally, this more than anything else is why I can't stand the song "Dare to Be a Daniel"! The song "Dare to Be a Daniel" is all about standing alone against the world. But Daniel stood alone for the sake of the world – for the sake of the King – even the pagan Nebuchadnezzar!) Yes, he confronts Nebuchadnezzar – but not in defiance of the King! – he calls Nebuchadnezzar to repentance, for the sake of the King!

And in the rest of **verse 19**, you hear the confidence that the King has in Daniel – and you hear Daniel's wise and gracious reply: *The king answered and said, "Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies!*

And then Daniel explains the dream very simply and plainly. (**vv.19ff**) - The tree is the King. You are the man! When you give the King bad news, you want to make it clear that you honor him – "*Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth*." and you want to deflect the consequences: "*may this never happen to you!*"

But at the same time, Daniel offers Nebuchadnezzar a way to escape the consequences. After all, Daniel knows the prophetic tradition of his people: God never sends a prophet with a warning unless it is possible to escape the threatened judgment. Think of Jonah – he refused to go to Nineveh because he knew that God is merciful! And he wanted God to destroy the Assyrians!! And think of Elisha – he had a house in Samaria – the king's city – because Elisha did not preach against the house of Ahab the way that Elijah did! Elijah preached against the house of Ahab regularly – calling them to repentance. But before God took Elijah up into heaven, God made it clear that the time had passed for the house of Ahab to repent. Elisha was sent to destroy the house of Ahab – not call it to repentance! So you simply don't find Elisha preaching against the house of Ahab! (The irony is that the house of Ahab seems to have thought that Elisha was more friendly!)

Daniel understands that the dream is a final warning to Nebuchadnezzar: *27 Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity*." Do righteousness. Show mercy to the oppressed. This is the message that we need to bring to all those who are in positions of authority. Turn away from sin. Repent. Practice righteousness. Establish justice. Make sure that your community is ordered in such a way that the weak and helpless are protected.

Honestly? This dream was easy to interpret. Nebuchadnezzar himself probably understood it (in one sense) without Daniel. But here's the problem: he didn't like the interpretation! He didn't want to know what it meant! This is the problem we all face! Pastor, how can I have a better marriage? Well, you could lay down your life for your spouse – like Christ loved the church! I'd rather not… Any other ideas? You already know how to be a good person: *love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength – and love your neighbor as yourself*!

He has told you, O man, what is good, and what does the LORD require of you but to love justice and to do mercy, and to walk humbly with your God! (**Micah 6:8**) It's not complicated! The Christian life is profoundly simple! The problem is that we are too much like Nebuchadnezzar!

4. "The Most High Rules the Kingdom of Men" – The Fulfillment (v28-33)
(:28-30) - I don't know about you – but I tend to pat myself on the back and say, "look at these great things that I have done!" We make ourselves the center of the universe. As though heaven and earth revolve around us! Or, at least, as though my family revolves around me… and if my wishes are not followed, there will be hell to pay!! You… are the Nebuchadnezzar of your own little personal Babylon! And the warning comes to you – in your little, tiny kingdom – just as it did to that king who ruled over all the earth!

(:31-33) -- Think about what happens to Nebuchadnezzar: his dwelling is the with the beasts of the field; he eats grass like an ox; and his hair grows as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws… Man is turned into a beast. Because he has refused to accept that he is but the image of God, he loses everything that distinguishes him from the animals! If you insist on clinging to your petty little kingdom of one, then you will one day face Nebuchadnezzar's fate! Oh, not necessarily the particular details of eating grass like an ox – but the disintegration of your own personal kingdom. It may still be there! (Babylon did not cease to be a great empire!) But you will not be able to enjoy it. God will not be mocked! If you refuse to honor and glorify him, then whatever honor and glory you have will be taken away!

The ESV is correct to say that Nebuchadnezzar's madness lasted for "*seven periods of time*." Some have suggested that this means "seven years" – but there is nothing in the text that requires such a meaning. This is the word used in **chapter 2** to say that God changes "times" and seasons – or in **chapter 3** to speak of the "time" when the three friends would hear the music It is also the word used in **chapter 7** of the "time" "times" and "half a time." But the key is found in **verse 32**: *until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will*.

Until. Here is the mercy that God showed to Nebuchadnezzar! God's purpose was to humble this king and bring him to repentance! The Most High rules the kingdom of men. Some speak of the "two kingdoms" as though God rules the Kingdom of God, and Satan rules the Kingdom of Man. But no! Daniel tells us that the Most High rules everything! (And as **Daniel 7** will make clear, the Most High rules everything through his Son – by whom he also made all things! **Hebrews 1**).

At the end of the chapter, there is a sort of "conversion" of Nebuchadnezzar:

5. "His Kingdom Endures" – The Conclusion (v34-37)
Here, at the end of his life, Nebuchadnezzar comes to praise and extol and honor the King of heaven. He accepts the simple truth that He is God, and I am not. Calvin says well that repentance "is the true-turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and consists in the mortification [the putting to death] of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivification [the coming to life] of the Spirit… in a word, I interpret repentance as regeneration, whose sole end is to restore to us the image of God that has been disfigured and all but obliterated."

There is considerable debate over whether Nebuchadnezzar was converted here at the end of his life. I don't know! It is possible that Nebuchadnezzar simply ordered Daniel to write up the decree, signed it – and never thought about it again. But if he actually meant these words, if this expresses the heart of Nebuchadnezzar, then the man who destroyed the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem became a living stone in the heavenly temple that Jesus is building!

"*Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble*." Those who exalt themselves will be humbled – but those who humble themselves will be exalted. Why? Because the Son of God established this pattern for us! "*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*." (**Phil 2:6-11**)

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **Learning about the Sovereignty of God the Hard Way**
Introduction: What we're going to study tonight here in Daniel chapter four is a man who was a brilliant man. He was a genius. He was a leader. He was powerful and yet he couldn't seem to learn a lesson. And he finally did learn the lesson, because let me tell you something. When God wants to teach you something, guess what? You're going to learn it. The question is, will you learn it the easy way or will you learn it the hard way? Well, here's a man that learned it the hard way. And this is a man who stubbornly resisted a truth. And it is the truth that I think probably I love most about God. It is the truth about God being sovereign.

I. The King and His Declaration
This is the testimony of King Nebuchadnezzar recorded under inspiration by Daniel. It is a testimony of God working in Nebuchadnezzar's life. Another thing about this is that this chapter opens in a doxology and it closes in a doxology.

Another interesting thing about the chapter is that it switches back and forth between first person and then third-person and then back to first-person. Nebuchadnezzar is doing the speaking first-person verses one through eighteen. And then he leaves all speaking when you get down to verse nineteen and verse twenty eight and it's in the third person. You know why? Because he's going to go through a period of insanity in his life where he's not sure what's going on. And Daniel takes over from there. And then towards the end of the chapter, verse thirty four, Nebuchadnezzar goes back to speaking and it goes back to first person.

I believe that this chapter is the conversion story of this pagan king. Some

commentators
have called this the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar, and I think that they're right. I think that this is the climax here. He praises God for his greatness and his power and his sovereignty.

II. The King in His Dream – 4:4

He has a troubling dream. Now, this is going to sound familiar, but notice the inability of the
wise men. Daniel then enters with perfect timing. Daniel here is distinct among these other guys in the king recognize that he obviously holds Daniel in high esteem. He says this man has in him the spirit of the Holy God. Now that is a Babylonian way of trying to say he is different from everyone else. God speaks through him. Daniel was the standard of wisdom.

III. The King and His Demise

IV. The King in His Doxology

Practical Lessons:

1) God will go to any extreme to show you He is sovereign.
2) God is faithful to punish the sin of pride.
3) Be careful not to mistake God's patience for God's tolerance.
4) We're responsible to speak the truth in love.

TEXT: Daniel 5:1-31

TITLE: THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL – NUMBERED, WEIGHED AND REJECTED

BIG IDEA:
SOME DAY THE PARTY WILL BE OVER ABRUPTLY FOR ANY WORLD SYSTEM THAT REJECTS GOD

INTRODUCTION:

"*Turn out the lights, the party is over*!" The jig is up. World powers can bask in their false confidence and take security in their wealth and power. But when God decides to render judgment that is the end of the story. Here Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, is brought to his knees in abject terror as the divine inscription on the lamplit wall in his indulgent feast spells out the divine indictment: "*Numbered, Weighed and Rejected*." The king had failed to learn the key lesson from Nebuchadnezzar before him:

> "*the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind,*
> *and that He sets over it whomever He wishes.*"

The lesson of God's sovereign rule leaves no room for the pride and arrogance of human leaders.

Bruce Hurt: **Daniel 5** is the source of several sayings that are popular in the secular culture:

(1) "*the handwriting is on the wall*" speaking of impending disaster that is so obvious only a fool could not see it coming and
(2) A similar expression stating that "*your days are numbered*."
(3) The description of one in great fear as "*his knees are knocking*"! (As someone once said "If your knees are knocking, kneel on them!")

Stephen Miller: Several truths may be observed in this chapter.

- First, as in all of the book, God's sovereignty is emphasized. Belshazzar foolishly challenged Yahweh's power, and he was no match for the living God.
- Second, human beings may go so far in sin (in this case blasphemy) that they bring God's temporal judgment upon themselves.
- Third, a lesson concerning God's faithfulness and the trustworthiness of the Word of God may be discovered, for this chapter records the fulfillment of prophecies predicting the downfall of Babylon (cf. **Isa 21:1–10; Jer 51:39, 57**). God had kept his word. "*Babylon has fallen, has fallen*!" (**Isa 21:9**).

Iain Duguid: King Hiero of Syracuse had a problem. He had entrusted a certain weight of gold to a craftsman to make a crown for him, but he didn't really trust the man. The finished crown weighed the right amount, but had the craftsman really used all of the

gold to make the crown or had he substituted much cheaper silver for part of it? How could the king test the crown's composition and integrity without destroying it?

King Hiero entrusted the problem to his friend Archimedes, the famous scientist. For a long time, Archimedes puzzled over the problem. At last, he decided to take a bath to clear his head. But he had filled the bathtub too full, and when he sat down in it, the water splashed over the top. In a flash, Archimedes saw the answer to the problem. A body immersed in water displaces its own volume of water. Once he knew the volume and the weight of the crown, he could then calculate its density and determine whether it was pure gold or not. "Eureka!" he cried (which in Greek means "I've found it"), reportedly so excited about his discovery that he proceeded to run through the streets of Syracuse naked. The rest is history, and ever since then the word "Eureka" has indicated the moment of discovery: the point at which the true nature of something is made clear.

Daniel 5 is a "Eureka" moment, in which the true nature of the young Babylonian king, Belshazzar, is exposed, along with the emptiness of his gods. For all their boasted pomp and show and in spite of all of their gold and glory, Belshazzar and his gods are found wanting and exposed as empty and insubstantial when they are weighed in God's balance. They can offer nothing that we should envy, nor can they threaten anything by which we should be intimidated. Rather, we should pity those whose hope and glory are built on such insubstantial foundations. . .

Belshazzar's ability to close his eyes to reality has a contemporary ring to it in every age. Just as Belshazzar feasted even while the armies of his Median and Persian adversaries were encamped outside his gates, so too rebellious humanity actively suppresses the truth about God that bombards their senses on every side (**Rom. 1:18**). Many around us eat and drink and busily pursue an actively sinful lifestyle, all the while deliberately ignoring God's revelation of himself in the Scriptures, in their consciences, and in the world. Just as Belshazzar used the temple vessels to praise his false gods, so too we take the things that belong to God and use them to feed our lusts and idolatries. Should we continue along that path, our fate is as deserved as it is certain.

Tremper Longman III: The theme of **Daniel 5** fits into the theme of the whole book: In spite of present appearances, God is in control. This theme is important in the context of the oppression of God's people at the hands of arrogant pagan rulers like Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. In the case of the former, God shows how he can overcome the pride of a powerful ruler by humbling him into repentance. In the case of the latter, God shows what he does with one who remains unrepentant. In either case, God shows himself to be more powerful than these hostile yet powerful kings, thus again giving comfort to his faithful, suffering people.

John Goldingay: **Daniel 5** is not just about a one-time event in the sixth century; it is a theological reflection on divine justice in the history of the world and it contains a parable about a scale in which God weighs oppressors.

I. (:1-4) PARTY ATMOSPHERE OF THE WORLD OBLIVIOUS TO IMPENDING DOOM

A. (:1) Indulgent Celebration

"*Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand.*"

Reminds one of the characterization of the days of Noah just before the flood; everyone is eating and drinking and indulging their fleshly appetites while mocking God; oblivious to the imminent judgment of the Flood; Belshazzar had a great sense of false security behind the walls of his great city of Babylon

John MacArthur: These events occurred in 539 B.C., over two decades after Nebuchadnezzar's death.

Andrew Hill: The story of Belshazzar's feast begins **abruptly**, introducing a new character to the book and offering no chronological notice or transitional introduction. Despite the sudden shift in the narrative from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the reign of Belshazzar, Redditt, 87, rightly notes that the bridge between **chs. 4** and **5** is the theme of the doxology concluding **ch. 4**: "*and those who walk in pride, he is able to humble*" (**4:37**).

Wiersbe: This feast was a microcosm of the world system and focused on "*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*" (**1 John 2:16**). . . Belshazzar knew that the army of the Medes and Persians was encamped outside the city, but he was indifferent to the danger that they posed. After all, the city was surrounded by a complex series of walls, some of them over 300 feet high, and there were numerous defense towers on the walls. Could any army break through the fortified bronze gates?

Bruce Hurt: **Security** and sensuality are often harbingers of approaching ruin. The Medo-Persian army was outside of Babylon and possibly had either captured Nabonidus or at least had cut him off from returning to the city. Belshazzar, ruling in his father's place, and knowing of the threat to the city but feeling secure behind its great walls, had the hubris to hold a great feast and drink wine offering praise to Babylon's so called "gods".

Iain Duguid: Outwardly, this was a glorious event, full of pomp and circumstance, in which a thousand nobles were invited to drink wine with the king (**Dan. 5:1**). Greek historians like Herodotus recorded many such lavish feasts on the part of the Babylonians, and this was one of the best. Everyone was dressed in his finest clothes and the tables were set with the most ornate silverware. Yet by focusing our attention on this elaborate feast as the sole event worth mentioning in his account, the narrator subtly underlines for us the emptiness of the remainder of Belshazzar's life. Unlike his illustrious predecessor, King Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed cities and carried off plunder (**Dan. 1:2**), made mighty statues (), and built the wonders of royal Babylon (**4:30**), the only thing that Belshazzar **Dan. 3**could make was a feast. The former built

an empire, while the latter planned a party. Even the centerpiece of Belshazzar's feast—the golden vessels that had been taken from the Jerusalem temple—had been carried off by Nebuchadnezzar, not Belshazzar (**1:2**). Belshazzar's only contribution was to profane those sacred and precious vessels from the Lord's house by using them for a feast at which he praised his own gods—gods made out of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone (**5:3–4**).

B. (:2-3) Irreverent Consumption

1. **(:2)** Supreme Arrogance

"*When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, in order that the king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them.*"

John MacArthur: The celebration was designed to boost morale and break the feelings of doom, because at this very time, armies of Medo-Persia (cf. **v. 30**) had Babylon helplessly under siege.

2. (:**3**) Sacrilegious Abomination

"*Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which was in Jerusalem; and the king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines drank from them.*"

C. (:4) Idolatrous Carousing

"*They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone.*"

Stephen Miller: Why did Belshazzar choose to challenge and blaspheme the God of Israel rather than one of the countless other foreign deities? Archer thinks that the king just happened to remember the beautiful goblets taken from Jerusalem and decided to put them to good use. But this seems unlikely. There would have been many other feasts in which these goblets could have been used but evidently were not. And surely other nations had been conquered by the Babylonians, whose religious goblets were beautiful and could have been brought into the feast.

More likely on the evening in question Belshazzar desecrated the holy objects of other nations as well as those of Israel in an attempt to demonstrate the superiority of the gods of Babylon over the deities of the nations. This would have been an act of propaganda intended to bolster the confidence of his citizens in light of the presence of the Medo-Persian armies outside of the city walls. Belshazzar was assuring his subjects that the gods of Babylon, and he as their earthly representative, were capable of protecting them.

II. (:5-9) PANIC ATTACK OVER THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

A. (:5-6) Divine Authorship of Indictment

1. **(:5)** The Writing of the Hand

"*Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing.*"

2. (:**6**) The Reaction of the King

"*Then the king's face grew pale, and his thoughts alarmed him; and his hip joints went slack, and his knees began knocking together.*"

B. (:7-9) Desperate Attempt at Interpretation

1. (:**7**) Reward Offered

"*The king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners. The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, 'Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me will be clothed with purple, and have a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as third ruler in the kingdom.'*"

John Walvoord: The astrologers were actually the magicians, the Chaldeans were a broad class of scholars and learned men in the lore of the Babylonians, and the soothsayers corresponded more closely to the modern concept of astrologers, although they may have also practiced sorcery.

2. **(:8)** Remains a Mystery

"*Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king.*"

3. (:**9**) Reaction of the King

"*Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew even paler, and his nobles were perplexed.*"

Walvoord: Belshazzar's predicament is another illustration of the insecurity and powerlessness of the rulers of this world when confronted by the power and wisdom of God. How God holds in derision the rulers of the world who take counsel against Him (**Ps 2:1-4**)! Like Nebuchadnezzar before him, Belshazzar was soon to experience divine judgment but without the happy ending.

Warren Wiersbe: The ignorance of the wise men made the king even more terrified, and his lords were perplexed and confused and could offer him no help. The time had come when political authority, wealth, power, and human wisdom could do nothing to solve the problem. Once again, the Lord had exposed he ignorance of the world and the futility of human power to discover and explain the mind and will of God.

III. (:10-16) PERSONAL APPEAL TO DANIEL AND HIS GOD FOR INSIGHT

A. (:10-12) Daniel Recommended by the Queen

1. (:**10**) Intervention by the Queen

"*The queen entered the banquet hall because of the words of the king and his nobles; the queen spoke and said, 'O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale.*'"

2. (:**11-12a**) Introduction of Daniel with Impressive Credentials

"*There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans, and diviners. This was because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas, and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar.*"

Paul Lederach: Linked to the presence of God in Daniel's life are three characteristics: enlightenment, understanding, and wisdom (**5:11**). Contributing to his appointment as chief of the wise men are his excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems (**5:12**).

3. (:**12b**) Instructions to Summon Daniel with the Expectation of Illumination

"*Let Daniel now be summoned, and he will declare the interpretation.*"

B. (:13-16) Daniel Summoned and Incentivized for Interpreting the Dream

1. (:**13-14**) Daniel Summoned and Praised for His Stellar Reputation

"*Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke and said to Daniel, 'Are you that Daniel who is one of the exiles from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? Now I have heard about you that a spirit of the gods is in you, and that illumination, insight, and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you.*'"

Andrew Hill: Belshazzar's omission of the adjective "*holy*" in his description of the divine source of Daniel's wisdom (**v.14**) may have significance in view of the king's corrupt character. It is possible that "the king may have been fearful of Daniel's interpretation since this man worshiped the God whom Belshazzar had just blasphemed" (Miller, 161). Felwell, 126–27, suggests the tone and content of the king's speech is symptomatic of a much deeper psychological problem, namely, Belshazzar's **personal insecurities** and his resentment of his (grand)father Nebuchadnezzar's power and success. Lucas, 138, discerns that Nebuchadnezzar's pride had a quality of **arrogance** because of his great achievements, whereas Belshazzar's pride is marked by i**nsolence** because of his lack of achievements. Daniel reminds the king of all that his (grand)father was and all that he is not.

2. (:**15**) Daniel Contrasted with the Failure of the Babylonian Soothsayers

"*Just now the wise men and the conjurers were brought in before me that they might read this inscription and make its interpretation known to me, but they could not declare the interpretation of the message.*"

3. (:**16**) Daniel Incentivized

a. His Reputation

"*But I personally have heard about you, that you are able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems.*"

b. His Reward

"*Now if you are able to read the inscription and make its interpretation known to me, you will be clothed with purple and wear a necklace of gold around your neck, and you will have authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.*"

John Walvoord: Too often the world, like Belshazzar, is not willing to seek the wisdom of God until its own bankruptcy becomes evident. Then help is sought too late, as in the case of Belshazzar, and the cumulative sin and unbelief which precipitated the crisis in the first place becomes the occasion of downfall.

IV. (:17-28) PROPHETIC APPLICATION OF THE DIVINE INSCRIPTION

A. (:17) Right Interpretation Not Conditioned on Reward

"*Then Daniel answered and said before the king, 'Keep your gifts for yourself, or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him.'*"

Rich Cathers: Ministry is free. Jesus told His disciples: (**Mt 10:8KJV**) "*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give*." I think this goes beyond whether or not you get "paid" for ministry or for helping others. Why do you help others? Do you expect to get something in return? Sometimes we can find ourselves serving others to gain "respect". And then when someone doesn't show us any "respect", we act surprised and think about quitting.

Stephen Miller: Daniel likely refused Belshazzar's gifts not out of pride or rudeness but in order to alleviate any misconception that God's services could be bought and to avoid obligation to the king.

B. (:18-19) Royal Dominion Conditioned on Divine Favor and Delegated Authority

"*O king, the Most High God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory, and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father. And because of the grandeur which He bestowed on him, all the peoples, nations, and men of every language feared and trembled before him; whomever he wished he killed, and whomever he wished he spared alive; and whomever he wished he elevated, and whomever he wished he humbled.*"

C. (:20-21) Repentance Conditioned on Humiliating Judgment

1. (:**20a**) Heart Attitude to Be Judged = Pride and Arrogance

"*But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit became so proud that he behaved arrogantly,*"

2. (:**20b-21a**) Punishment to Be Experienced

a. Deposed From the Royal Throne

"*he was deposed from his royal throne, and his glory was taken away from him.*"

b. Driven Away From Mankind to Live Like an Animal

"*He was also driven away from mankind, and his heart was made like that of beasts, and his dwelling place was with the wild donkeys.*"

c. Degraded to a State of Abject Humiliation

"*He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven,*"

3. (:**22**b) Lesson to Be Learned = Key to Repentance

"*until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind, and that He sets over it whomever He wishes.*"

Iain Duguid: The point of Daniel's speech is clear: King Nebuchadnezzar had had something to be proud about, yet the Lord had humbled him. Belshazzar, who certainly fell far short of Nebuchadnezzar's achievements, should have learned from this experience and humbled himself as well. Instead, although Belshazzar knew what had happened to Nebuchadnezzar, he had still exalted himself against the Lord, sacrilegiously profaning the temple vessels from Jerusalem by using them in an idolatrous act of worship. He had praised his powerless idols, while neglecting the one true God who gave him his very life-breath. Daniel brought this charge against him, explaining why God was warning him in this way: **5:22-24**.

D. (:22-23) Repetition of the Sins of Your Father

1. (:**22-23a**) Pride and Arrogance

"*Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, 23 but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven;*"

Andrew Hill: Daniel rebukes Belshazzar for his pride on two accounts. First, the king has learned nothing from the example of Nebuchadnezzar despite his awareness of the episode (**v.22**). Second, Belshazzar has "*exalted*" (NASB) himself against the Lord of heaven in his arrogant act of desecrating the drinking vessels from the Jerusalem temple (**v.23a**). God holds Belshazzar equally culpable for the sin of pride—perhaps even more so, since his sacrilege is combined with blatant idolatry (**v.23b**; cf. Miller, 163). Thus the handwriting on the wall of the banquet hall is God's response to the proud heart and profane actions of the Babylonian king (**v.24**). Naturally, Daniel's indictment of

Belshazzar sets the judgmental tone and portends the apocalyptic content of the divine message encrypted in the supernatural inscription.

John Goldingay: Daniel makes Belshazzar the subject of a series of strong verbs: "*You knew, you ignored, you exalted yourself, you desecrated, you committed idolatry, you disregarded*" (**vv. 22–23**). Daniel emphasizes Belshazzar's **responsibility** for his attitudes and actions. His willful blindness makes him brazenly proud, just like his father (the same words are used), in the very presence of the one who is actually Lord of the heavens. This phrase comes only here; both elements in it suggest the almightiness of the one Belshazzar disdains. His willful blindness makes him sacrilegiously contemptuous of the sacred possessions of this God, who entrusted them to his father. The vessels that should have reminded him of the God who gave them into Nebuchadnezzar's power (**1:2**) become the means of his self-indulgence. It makes him grotesquely idolatrous in worshiping senseless objects and ignoring the God who has power over his destiny; he fails to take God seriously, like his father—but with less excuse, because his father's story has made clear to him that God has this power. Historically, Belshazzar may have fallen because he could not handle a political and military crisis; in this story, more profoundly he fell because of his irresponsibility before God. He has despised the riches of God's kindness, forbearance, and longsuffering (**Rom 2:4**) as he has seen them extended to Nebuchadnezzar; hence the psalm's exhortation not to harden your hearts when you hear God's voice (**Ps 95:7–8**).

2. (:**23b**) Profane and Irreverent Sacrilege and Fleshly Indulgence

"*and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them;*"

3. (:**23c**) Praise of Impotent Idols Instead of Glorifying the Life-Giving God

"*and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand.*
But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and your ways, you have not glorified."

Bruce Hurt: Notice the three charges by Daniel:

(1) He had not humbled his heart even though he knew about God and His good works through the life of Nebuchadnezzar. (Da 5:22).
(2) He deliberately mocked God by desecrating God's holy vessels… this was sin that reflected willful defiance and not ignorance!
(3) He worshiped idols.

"If God held Belshazzar responsible, my friend, for the ray of light which shone across his pathway, what will He say to men living in the blaze of light which illuminates the world today? Every unconverted man in this country has more light than Belshazzar had." (Talbot)

Andrew Hill: Daniel exposes both Belshazzar's ignorance and foolishness for his failure to "*honor*" the God who holds his "*life*" (or "life-breath," NASB) in his hand (**v.23**) by worshiping "*lifeless*" objects made with human hands. The prophet Jeremiah recognized as much when he acknowledged that a person's life is not one's own and that individuals do not direct their own steps (**Jer 10:23**). The "*ways*" (**v.23**; Aram. *ʾaraḥ*; GK 10068) of a person refers to the destiny of an individual, "the course of life that someone follows, which is seen as plotted and controlled by God—without implying that it is predetermined in such a way as to make human decision-making illusory" (Goldingay, 110). The concept is prominent in OT wisdom literature (**Job 8:13; 22:28; 24:23; Pr 3:6; 4:18; 20:24**), as is the idea that God holds a person's breath or life in his hand (cf**. Job 12:10; 34:14–15; Ps 104:29**).

E. (:24-28) Record of God's Written Indictment

1. (:**24-25**) The Inscription

"*Then the hand was sent from Him, and this inscription was written out. 25 Now this is the inscription that was written out: 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.'*"

Paul Lederach: First, Daniel tells Belshazzar that the hand was sent from the presence of the Lord of heaven (**5:24**). This God is living and able to act. His works are in stark contrast to the gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood, and stone that are carried into the city to provide protection. In the great hall, the idols sit where they have been placed. They cannot see, hear, nor respond.

John MacArthur: *Upharsin* is the plural of *Peres*, possibly emphasizing the parts in the division. The "U" prefix has the idea of the English "and."

2. (:**26-28**) The Interpretation

"*This is the interpretation of the message:*"

a. (:**26**) Numbered

"'*MENE '-- God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it.*"

b. (:**27**) Weighed

"'*TEKEL '-- you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient*"

c. (:**28**) Rejected

"'*PERES '-- your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.*"

Warren Wiersbe: Peres carried a double meaning: "*divided*" and "*Persia*." Babylon would be divided between the Medes and the Persians whose armies were at the gates of the city that very night.

Tremper Longman III: That Belshazzar has ruled at all—indeed, that Babylon has achieved ascendancy as the major power of the world—has been at God's sovereign determination, but it was a temporary period now at an end. Belshazzar and the Babylonians have not measured up, and so now another power will come to the throne, one dominated by Persia, which includes the Medes. No further explanation is needed from Daniel; the message is clear, and it spells doom.

(:29-31) POSTSCRIPT

A. (:29) Elevation of Daniel

"*Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.*"

John Walvoord: The drama of the writing on the wall and its interpretation is now brought to its fulfillment as Belshazzar keeps his promises. Daniel is clothed with scarlet, a chain of gold put about his neck, and a proclamation issued that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. All of these honors, however, were short-lived and useless, as Daniel well knew, and typical of the honors of this world. In its rise to power the Babylonian Empire had conquered Jerusalem, taken its inhabitants into captivity, looted its beautiful temple, and completely destroyed the city. Yet this empire was to have as its last official act the honoring of one of these captives who by divine revelation predicted not only the downfall of Babylon but the course of the times of the Gentiles until the Son of man should come from heaven. Man may have the first word, but God will have the last word.

B. (:30) Execution of Belshazzar

"*That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain.*"

Iain Duguid: Belshazzar's party is thus exposed as the ultimate act of folly: he was feasting on the brink of the grave and celebrating on the edge of extinction, and he never even knew it. With Belshazzar's death, Babylon's empire was itself brought crashing to the ground, its feet of clay revealed. The sequence of decay that the vision of **Daniel 2** anticipated for world history—moving from gold to silver to bronze to fragile feet of iron and clay—found a foreshadowing within the history of the Babylonian empire. Like the sequence of weights in the oracle, the once mighty kingdom became insubstantial and was ultimately blown away by the judgment of God. Or, picking up other biblical echoes, the New Babel ended its days under the judgment of God, under a curse of incomprehensible speech and a divinely imposed division, just like the first Tower of Babel in **Genesis 11**.

C. (:31) Exaltation of Darius the Mede

"*So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.*"

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) How can we learn from the mistakes of our fathers so that we do not repeat their failures?

2) What message should we bring to a world that is so blinded by pride and arrogance and false security and so consumed with fleshly prosperity and futile idolatry that it is ignorant of imminent divine judgment?

3) How much more divine content is available to pagan world leaders today in the Scriptures than the simple inscription on the wall that terrified the King of Babylon?

4) Where can we get the boldness that Daniel exhibited to be faithful communicators of God's hard message in difficult contexts today?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

John Walvoord: The long chapter devoted to this incident which brought the Babylonian Empire to its close is undoubtedly recorded in the Word of God not only for its historic fulfillment of the prophecies relative to the Babylonian Empire but also as an illustration of divine dealing with a wicked world. The downfall of Babylon is in type the downfall of the unbelieving world. In many respects, modern civilization is much like ancient Babylon, resplendent with its monuments of architectural triumph, as secure as human hands and ingenuity could make it, and yet defenseless against the judgment of God at the proper hour. Contemporary civilization is similar to ancient Babylon in that it has much to foster human pride but little to provide human security. .

Throughout Scripture, Babylon (the rebel city) is contrasted to Jerusalem (the holy city). Babylon was founded by Nimrod, a reel against the Lord (**Gen. 10:8-10**). It is seen in Scripture as the great city of this world, while Jerusalem symbolizes the eternal city of God. … The future Babylonian world system will help Antichrist, the man of sin, rise to power in this world, but his kingdom will be destroyed by Jesus Christ when He returns to reign (**Rev. 19:11-21**).

Jeff Kingery: **God's Got Your Number**
Belshazzar saw no need to fast, no need to fear, he said, "Hey, let's throw a feast!" It was open mockery of the Persians who were waiting outside. His name "Belshazzar" means "Bel (his god) has protected the king". So this party is his way of saying, "Don't worry about what's going on outside . . .

But it blows us away that they could be surrounded by imminent danger on every side & yet be more concerned for the pursuits of pleasure, even willing to blaspheme the God of heaven in using sacred vessels in a sacrilegious, blasphemous kind of way.

Yet at the same time it's a profound picture of our world today! Judgment on the horizon, a sudden inescapable destruction about to fall & yet people are pursuing pleasure, worshiping gods of gold & silver (focused more on making money & consumed w/the cares of this world) rather than turning from sin & crying out to the Living God in repentance… There's a false sense of security that people have bought into… Even as Paul the apostle warned, "*For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*" Rather than face reality responsibly people prefer to escape reality through the pursuit of pleasure.. . .

So; it's situation normal for Daniel, right? Revelation from God; fearful & frustrated ruler, no-one & nothing else could help, now it's God's servant to the rescue… This is what I was referring to a second ago. As long as the party is going & the people are living large; God & His servants are mocked, neglected, made fun of & kept out of the mix of things. But when trouble presents itself & there seems to be no solution, they cry out for the one in whom was the Spirit of God…

Secular history records that King Cyrus (Darius believed to be his general) actually created channels that diverted the Euphrates so that the army marched in through the river bed, under the sluice gates & the soldiers & nobles being so inebriated (presumably from this affair) didn't even offer resistance. Belshazzar was slain & that was the end of it…

Don Robinson: Outline of the Book of Daniel – **Belshazzar's Feast**

Da 5:1-4 - Belshazzar's Contribution to the Feast: Unrestrained Sensuality,
Da 5:5-6 - God's Contribution to the Feast: Handwriting on the Wall
Da 5:7-29 - Daniel's Contribution to the Feast: Announcement of Doom
Da 5:30-31 - Darius's Contribution to the Feast: Destruction of Babylon

Matthew Henry: God's written word is enough to put the proudest, boldest sinner in a fright. What we see of God, the part of the hand that writes in the book of the creatures, and in the book of the Scriptures, should fill us with awful thoughts concerning that part which we do not see. If this be the finger of God, what is His arm when made bare? And what is He? The king's guilty conscience told him that he had no reason to expect any good news from heaven. God can, in a moment, make the heart of the stoutest sinner to tremble; and there needs no more than to let loose His own thoughts upon him; they will give him trouble enough. No bodily pain can equal the inward agony which sometimes seizes the sinner in the midst of mirth, carnal pleasures, and worldly pomp. Sometimes terrors cause a man to flee to Christ for pardon and peace; but many cry out for fear of wrath (**Rev 6:16, 17-notes**), who are not humbled for their sins, and who seek relief by lying vanities. The ignorance and uncertainty concerning the Holy Scriptures, shown by many who call themselves wise, only tend to drive sinners to despair, as the ignorance of these wise men did.

Peter Wallace: **Humble Yourself Before the Lord**

Cyrus was about 62 when he conquered Babylon (ca. 539 B.C.) – and Belshazar was the king that he overthrew – so it is likely that "Darius the Mede" refers to Cyrus. Kings in those days used lots of different throne names, so it would not at all be surprising if this was so. In fact, if you look ahead to chapter 6, verse 28, you could translate it, "Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, even the reign of Cyrus the Persian." For that matter, the name of Belshazzar had been forgotten to history. By the fifth century B.C., no one seemed to know anything about him! But then in the mid-19th century, researchers in Babylon came across a reference to Belshazzar, the son of Nabonidus, who ruled Babylon in place of his father, after his father had run afoul of the priests of Marduk. But all these kings become object lessons in our text about the importance of submitting to God.

The theme of chapter 4 was expressed clearly in the refrain that we heard repeatedly: "*the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will*." (**4:17, 25, 32**) That same refrain is found again here in **5:21** – but only once in our passage. Because our passage serves as a warning. Yes, God had mercy on Nebuchadnezzar, because he humbled himself (at least a little!). But Belshazzzar did not. And so Belshazzar serves as a cautionary tale that God's patience has limits. Humble yourself before the LORD and he will exalt you. Exalt yourself before the LORD and he will humble you!

1. The Handwriting Is on the Wall: Belshazzar Dishonors the Temple Vessels (v1-9)

Think about this! Nebuchadnezzar had plundered the temple – and he had placed the holy vessels in the temple of his god – as if to say, "my god is better than your God." But Belshazzar goes a step further. Nebuchadnezzar had at least respected the sacred vessels as sacred. But Belshazzar uses the temple vessels as common drinking cups for a drinking party! (Now, I want you to think about the context here. By the end of the chapter we will discover that this "drinking party" occurred while the Persians were besieging Babylon. So the "great feast" may not have been a mere "drinking party." This may have been Belshazzar's feast to the gods – imploring their aid against the Persians – and so he may have thought that bringing out the holy vessels from Jerusalem would "remind" the gods of how they had helped Nebuchadnezzar, and so now he implores them to help him! At least that's how Belshazzar may have interpreted what he was doing!)

But the Book of Daniel does not "honor" the gods of Babylon with a dispassionate scholarly analysis of what Belshazzar was thinking! After all, the gods of Babylon are gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone! We do not compare a feast to Marduk with a feast to Yahweh! A feast to Marduk is a mere drinking party! After all, Marduk does not answer! To use Elijah's words, from Mt. Carmel in **1 Kings 18**: "*Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.*" *28 And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. 29 And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention."*

But as in the days of Elijah, so also in the days of Daniel – neither Baal nor Marduk will answer. But the LORD answers! And 5 *Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand.* Opposite the lampstand. He is using temple vessels from the Holy Place of God's temple. Vessels that belonged in the service of the table of shewbread – opposite the lampstand! Belshazzar probably was not intimately familiar with the layout of Solomon's temple – but the author and the readers of the Book of Daniel were. There is a sort of "poetic justice" here. You have exalted yourself by doing that which only the Aaronic priests were allowed to do! And now the fingers of a human hand appear "opposite the lampstand." When man exalts himself against God, God will humble him – and generally in ways that are appropriate to his crime!

Here we are told that the king saw the hand as it wrote. As you might suppose, this is the origin of our phrase, "the handwriting is on the wall" – as if to say, the signs all point to the end of something. And Belshazzar rightly sees that this is an omen that bears ill news. Twice we are told that the king's color changed and he was greatly alarmed. He does not know what it means – but he can tell that it is bad news! So why does he offer such extravagant rewards? If he knows that the news is bad, why reward the one who can explain it? Well, when you are desperate, you will take extraordinary measures to know all that you can. Maybe if you have enough information, you can make the decision that will enable you to thwart the onslaught of danger!

Belshazzar continues to exalt himself. Persistently he refuses to humble himself. Even in his extravagant reward he exalts himself. He offers to make the wise man who can interpret this the "*third ruler in the kingdom*." He says this because his father, Nabonidus, was the first ruler. But because Nabonidus had alienated the priests of Marduk, Belshazzar was the second ruler – who had the practical rule of Babylon. But with all his power, and with all the patronage of the throne of Babylon, Belshazzar is still left with his knees knocking and his lords perplexed.

2. Call for Daniel! The Speech of the Queen Mother (v10-12)

Then the queen – probably the Queen Mother – came into the banqueting hall. I will have you notice that without the Queen, the narrative comes to a screeching halt. Everything else in the passage depends on her. (Think about the feasts in the book of Esther – and how central Esther is to the feasts in that book!) Who is the Queen? She might be the mother of Belshazzar – but it is more likely that she was a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and is referred to as queen only as a title of respect. (This would also explain why she was not present for the feast. She is not really part of the royal family. She is a last vestige of the former dynasty – who comes now to "save the day")

She refers to Nebuchadnezzar as "*your father the king*" – but that is merely a way of saying "you are the rightful king – therefore Nebuchadnezzar is your ancestor in the kinship!" (and if she is a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, then she needs to affirm that she supports the rule of Belshazzar!) After all, Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus. Nabonidus was an Assyrian general who had seized the throne during a coup in 556

B.C. Nebuchadnezzar had died in 562 B.C. – and his death led to general instability in the realm.

The Nabonidus Chronicle claims that Belshazzar was a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar but since Belshazzar was already an adult when Nabonidus took the throne, it is highly unlikely that this is literally true. It is more likely that "father" means "predecessor on the throne" (which was a very common way of speaking in the ancient world). But this also helps us understand this interaction. Belshazzar (and his father, Nabonidus) were outsiders. Even after 15 years, they did not know the whole history of Nebuchadnezzar's rule.

It also points out that even after 60 years, Daniel is still not accepted by the guild of the Chaldeans. Oh, but he was appointed "*chief of the magicians*" by Nebuchadnezzar! Doesn't that mean that Daniel was in charge of all the others? No. It means that Nebuchadnezzar had highly honored Daniel (twice). The book of Daniel never says that Daniel actually was in charge of all the native-born magicians. And everything that we see in the book of Daniel tells us that the native-born magicians did not submit to Daniel. (Only in chapter 6 will they finally be able to do anything to try to harm Daniel – but we should probably understand "chief of the magicians" as an honorary title more than a function of daily life!)

But while Belshazzar may not know about Daniel, the Queen Mother does. And so this representative of the older dynasty comes with a recommendation. Call for Daniel! And her words suggest that she has great respect for Daniel: "*in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him*." (**v11**) Sinclair Ferguson says well about her comment, that "This energy is the secret of all spiritual work and the hallmark of all those whom God has used in special ways. It is not a physical energy, although it often manifests itself in the sheer tireless patience and determination God's people have to finish their tasks."

What is this "*energy*"? Nothing else but the Spirit of God. "Daniel had a share in the Spirit of the Messiah… No wonder there were so many ways that Daniel resembled Christ." God had promised Abraham that those who bless you, I will bless. The Queen Mother blesses the Seed of Abraham with her words. We do not know whether she herself trusted in the God of Daniel – but from her words, it would not surprise me! Humble yourself before the LORD and he will exalt you!

3. Babylonian Blather: The Speech of Belshazzar (v13-16)

And so Daniel is brought in, and we have to endure four verses of Babylonian blather from Belshazzar! We already know everything here – but Belshazzar must say it all over again – because (as any good Presbyterian knows), it doesn't make a difference how many people have said this before me, if I haven't said it, it hasn't been said!!

But there is also considerable irony in this scene. Belshazzar has just insulted Daniel's God by drinking from the sacred vessels. He also highlights Daniel's humble origins – "*you are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from*

Judah" – you are a nobody! Ironic – given that the Queen Mother has just said that Daniel is his only hope! Exalt yourself before the LORD and he will humble you! Because like Belshazzar, your only hope is a castoff Jew who was despised by the rulers of his day!

4. You Have Not Honored God: The Speech of Daniel (v17-28)

a. Remember Nebuchadnezzar – Who Was Humbled by the Most High God **(v17-21)**

17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. In other words, I don't want to be part of your administration! I'm not going to interpret this for you out of any desire for reward. I'm over 80 years old, and I don't need anything that you can give me!

This principle will expressed later by the apostle Peter in reply to Simon Magus – "*Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money*!" (**Acts 8:20**) (Daniel will have no choice but to accept the honors later – but he makes it clear from the start that these honors will not influence his words.) I know the temptation! Pastors have always had to deal with the challenge of preaching to the people who pay them. God says that this is the way that we are supposed to do it (**1 Cor 9:11, 14**). The key is for both of us – both you and me – to simply follow Jesus. I am called to teach you to observe all that Jesus said. And you are called to provide for me and my family. And while I am not fit to evaluate myself in the first part of that, I am thankful to say that you have done so well at doing the second part!

But after rejecting the rewards of the king, Daniel says that he will still interpret the words. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. But before he does, he gives Belshazzar a lesson in theological history. I call it theological history – because Daniel is not just talking about "political history." He is talking about the spiritual realities behind the story of Nebuchadnezzar: **(:18-19**). Now let's be clear! This is talking about Nebuchadnezzar! Nebuchadnezzar killed whom he would, and raised up whom he would. Nebuchadnezzar even humbled whom he would! But the key is that all of this was because of the greatness that God gave him!!

(:20-21) - This briefly summarizes what we saw last week from chapter 4. The Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will. God set Nebuchadnezzar over ancient Babylon He set William the Conqueror over medieval England. He set Lenin over the Soviet Union – and yes, he has set Donald Trump over the United States. But the way that Daniel tells the story, we need to take this in a much broader, more all-encompassing sense. We are not just talking about politics here. We are talking about a theological vision of history. God's rule extends to all things. This book, after all, was not written to kings and rulers. This book was written for all of God's people. It's not just Gentile kings who need to humble themselves before the Lord! You do! Think about how Daniel says this to Belshazzar:

b. You Have Not Humbled Your Heart (**v22-23**)

"*And you*"… Fourteen times in these two verses (**v22-23**) the word "you" or "your" or "yourself" is used. What is the problem here? YOU ARE! You have exalted yourself. You have not humbled your heart. And notice the end of **verse 22** – "*though you knew all this*"! Maybe Belshazzar didn't know much about Daniel – but he knew all this.

Nowadays we seem to think that education is the solution to every problem. We must "enlighten" these poor ignorant blighters – and then they will know better! But how often are we genuinely ignorant? If the problem is ignorance, then the solution is education. But what if education doesn't work? Well, that would suggest that the problem lies elsewhere! What's my problem? "Me, me, me, me, me, me" What is it that I love? What is it that I desire? Where is your heart? As long as I am fixated on my own little kingdom – on furthering my power and my glory and my kingdom, forever, amen! – I will always run up against the uncomfortable – but inexorable – fact that I am not God – and my kingdom cannot last! That's why we pray in the Lord's Prayer: "*for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*" Thy kingdom come. Not my kingdom. I need to learn to humble myself – to deny myself, take up my cross, and follow Jesus.

But let's look at this a little closer: What was the fundamental sin of Belshazzar? Pride, yes. Exalting himself against the Lord of heaven. But how? Daniel highlights the particular sin that we heard just before Belshazzar saw the handwriting on the wall: you have drunk wine from the vessels of God's house – and you have praised the gods of silver and gold… which do not see or hear or know. You have used God's holy things to exalt yourselves. And you have refused to honor the God in whose hand is your breath.

Daniel focuses on the particular liturgical expression that Belshazzar's pride had taken. Where are the places in your life where you are exalting yourself at the expense of Christ? And particularly what are the practices – the habits – the patterns in your life – that are interfering with what God has called you to do and be? What are the things that are more important to you than the worship of God? What are the things that you will do rather than read the scriptures and pray? What will you prefer, rather than sing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs – something that Paul says we should be doing in our daily life in our homes! Yes, I know. It gets uncomfortable when I think about this for myself! I would rather play a computer game, than praise my God? Humble yourself before the almighty hand of God – before it's too late!

c. So the Sign Signifies Your End (**v24-28**)

And so Daniel says, here is what the inscription means. *Mene, mene, tekel, parsin*. In one sense, the words themselves were not all that difficult. They form a sequence of weights. '*mene*' – or mina – refers to a very large amount; '*tekel*' – or shekel – refers to a much smaller weight (1/60th of a mina); '*parsin*' – is a half-shekel. But the words also are related to other words, so if you interpret them more loosely, you could say, "*numbered, numbered, weighed and divided*." And the repetition of the word "numbered" has the effect of saying "it is surely numbered." And *Parsin* sounds an

awful lot like the word Persia. The particular judgment upon Belshazzar – and upon Babylon – is a reminder to us that there is a day of judgment coming – on which God will judge all mankind – the living and the dead. And, like Belshazzar, your only hope is a castoff Jew who was despised and rejected by men. Because, as Paul says, God has given notice of that coming day, by raising his Son from the dead! In the death and resurrection of Jesus, the last-days judgment of God came upon him – and he was vindicated! If you would share in his vindication – if you would be justified – then you must come to him in faith! – for there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved!

5. The Most High God Rules the Kingdom of Mankind and Gives It to Whom He Wills (v29-31)

But the ironies continue! Because Belshazzar gives Daniel the promised honors! Perhaps he felt obligated to fulfill his word. Perhaps he was drunk. Daniel must have wondered if he would be executed for giving the king bad news! (And especially for doing it in such an abrupt and peremptory way!) But our text shares Daniel's peremptory tone.

Because the conclusion of the matter comes in two short sentences: *30 That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. 31 [j] And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.* How did all this happen? Daniel will spend lots of time telling small stories. But of the siege of Babylon and the fall of the city, he offers no details. Why should he? The Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and gives it to whom he wills! It is sufficient to say that Belshazzar was killed that night – and Darius the Mede received the kingdom. That's how quick it can happen. All of a sudden – in a moment – your kingdom is gone. Humble yourself before the Lord, and he will exalt you!

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **Weighed and Found Wanting**

Introduction: Story of the Titanic – brought down by arrogance and pride --

Long before there was a Titanic, there was the sinking of the Titanic, there was the fall of Babylon. Long before there was a proud ship captain, there was a king by the name of Belshazzar.

Nebuchadnezzar died in 562. He was succeeded by his son, Ebal Merodic. How would you like to have a name like that? He reigned for two years, and he was assassinated by his brother-in-law, Neri Glisser. Neri Glisser ruledfor four years, and he died. He was succeeded by his son, Labishai Marduk. Labishai Marduk was a weak puppet ruler who reigned for only two months. He was beaten to death by conspirators and Nabonidus was appointed as the king of Babylon. Now Nabonidus felt guilty because he really didn't come from the family of Nebuchadnezzar. So in order to rectify that, he married into Nebuchadnezzar's family. he married either, and there's debate about this, he either married the widow of Nebuchadnezzar or the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. But he married into that royal family. And this woman whom he married, had a son by the name of Belshazzar. And this is the Belshazzar that we see here. He is the co-regent of

Babylon. And he was a man of his time. He represented the spirit of his era. He was a good representative because he was a man that was filled with idolatry and pride.

We're going to find out in the story that God weighed Belshazzar in his scales, and he was weighed and found what? Found wanting. He didn't measure up. And I want to give you some reasons why. I want to give you some characteristics of this man's pride.

I. He Was Presumptuously Indifferent – 5:1

Trusted in his thick walls. He wasn't concerned about what was going on on the outside. In fact, he said in verse number one, let's have a party. Men are ignorant of the danger that they are really in. They are presumptuous. They think they are guaranteed tomorrow. The Bible says, for when you say peace and safety, then comes what? Sudden destruction. And so Belshazzar really is a picture of the spirit of man, lost man, who does not recognize the danger that he's in.

II. He Was Proudly Irreverent – 5:2

Why would he single out the vessels that were taken from the house of the Lord in Jerusalem? The Temple of Marduk was a place where many trophies of war were placed. There were many vessels from many nations and many gods from all over. Why did Belshazzar single out the vessels from the house of God in Jerusalem? What he was doing was he was showing his utter contempt for the Word of God and for the God of the Hebrews, for the God that he had learned about. He was so confident in the defenses of his city. He was so confident that his gods, the gods of Babylon, would protect him. In fact, his name, Belshazzar, you know what it means? Whom Bell protects. He was confident in that protection. So really, his defiling of the vessels was his way of shaking his fist at God and saying, you said that this kingdom would fall to the Medo-Persians, but I am declaring publicly to you that Babylon will not fall." This was a defiant act. This was the height of blasphemy.

III. He Was Providentially Interrupted – 5:5

God will providentially interrupt our life and send us a clear message. God will do something to get the attention of a nation. God will send a clear signal. God will do something that will cause people to fear, people that live with indifference, people that live with irreverence. Every once in a while, God will do something to sober them up. [cf. Increase Mather's book: A History of God's Remarkable Providences in Colonial New England]

IV. He Was Purposely Ignorant – 5:10

He willfully rejected and ignored the lessons that he should have learned from history. He should have learned from his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar. Someone said those who don't learn from mistakes of history are doomed to repeat them. The reason he's being judged so severely by God is because he had the truth given to him and he pushed it aside and he ignored it. He knew God. God had revealed himself. He saw the power of God, but he pushed all that aside and he failed to humble his heart.

The literal translation we could say is numbered numbered two lights divided That was the prophecy It was God's prophecy that Morally and Spiritually he was bankrupt and his number was up.

V. He Was Promptly Invaded – 5:30

The Euphrates River ran through the city of Babylon, north to south, and Cyrus put his army around the city. He had men on the north of the Euphrates and on the south. They diverted the river. And when he diverted the river, the level of water lowered so that the men could march underneath the walls and get into the city. And since there were no guards at the walls, they took over the city with great ease.

God is a patient God, but there's a time when God says enough is enough. That's it. You've been weighed into balances and you're found wanting. The Bible says he that often being reproved and hardened at his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

TEXT: Daniel 6:1-28

TITLE: THE GOD WHO DELIVERS

BIG IDEA:
GOD CAN RESCUE HIS FAITHFUL SERVANTS FROM TREACHEROUS ENEMIES – EVEN FROM THE MOUTHS OF LIONS

INTRODUCTION:

Peter tells us "*Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour*" (**1 Pet. 5:8**). But as we see in the famous story of Daniel in the Lions' Den – our God is powerful to save and deliver! We should not be surprised when we face opposition and attacks from the corrupt world system. We might even find ourselves in a desperate predicament despite our innocence and integrity. We should be inspired by the faith and the courage and the calm of Daniel whose testimony was only enhanced by his dangerous trials. What an impact God can produce from such a faithful witness. "*He is the living God and enduring forever, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, and His dominion will be forever.*"

Bruce Hurt: This chapter marks the end of the "historical" (or narrative) section of Daniel and prepares us for the great prophecies in **Daniel 7-12**, prophecies that form the "back bone" or foundation for all other Biblical prophecies dealing with the last days that precede and terminate in the Second Coming of the Messiah.

Iain Duguid: In a world in which there really were people conspiring against him and dangers on all sides, he nonetheless exhibited a peace that is truly remarkable. It is not as though he failed to understand what was happening around him. He knew that we live in an exceedingly dangerous world, a world filled with lions, not all of whom are caged in pits. Yet at the same time Daniel also had a proper understanding of why these things were happening and, most importantly, who was in control. He knew that his God was sovereign over even the most fearsome dangers that roam this world. As a result, he was able to experience a profound peace in the midst of his trials and tribulations, just as much as when life was going rather more smoothly. If we want to have peace like the peace that Daniel possessed and to trust that everything will work out for good in the end in the midst of adversities and disappointments, then we need to learn the lessons that this chapter of God's Word has for us.

Paul Lederach: In this story are two major contrasts:

- First, between **two laws**, the law of God (**6:5**), and the law of the Medes and the Persians (**6:8, 12, 15**).
- Second, between **two deliverers**, King Darius (**6:14**) and God (**6:20, 27**).

The story assures the faithful that the law of the Medes and the Persians can be broken, and that God, not any earthly king, is able to deliver. . .

Throughout the story, Daniel stands in sharp contrast to the conspirators. They are jealous. Early on, they seek ways to discredit him. They scheme and manipulate the king. Their duplicity is apparent in proposing a decree that will enhance the king's power while destroying Daniel. They care little for truth, for the welfare of the empire, for the king, or for Medo-Persian law. Their consuming passion is to dispose of Daniel. On the other hand, Daniel has a wholesome spirit. He is an excellent administrator, careful with the smallest details (**6:3-4**). He is blameless before God and has not done the king any harm (**6:22**).

Tremper Longman III: As the chapter explores this conflict, it again emphasizes the overarching theme of the whole book: In spite of present appearances God is in control. God will be victorious over the seemingly powerful forces ranged against him and his people. Thus, this story, like those that preceded it, provides comfort for God's people, who find themselves in situations that seem beyond their control. . . The basic message of this chapter to later readers is simple: "Remain faithful! God will take care of you."

Stephen Miller: In this story **faithfulness** is exemplified. Daniel was faithful in old age, in godly example (**v. 5**), in prayer (**v. 10**), in trials (**v. 16**), and in testimony (vv. 16, 20). As a result he was delivered (**v. 22**), experienced a special manifestation of the presence of the Lord (**v. 22**), provided an opportunity for witness to unbelievers (**vv. 26–27**), and was blessed (**v. 28**).

Andrew Hill: Goldingay, 124, following Towner, 79, has outlined the contents of the chapter in a chiastic pattern:

A Introduction: Daniel's success (**vv.1–3**)
  B Darius's edict and Daniel's response (**vv.4–10**)
    C Daniel's opponents plot his death (**vv.11–15**)
      D Darius hopes for Daniel's deliverance (**vv.16–18**)
      D′ Darius witnesses Daniel's deliverance (**vv.19–23**)
    C′ Daniel's opponents sentenced to death (**vv.24**)
  B′ Darius's edict and doxology (**vv.25–27**)
A′ Conclusion: Daniel's success (**v.28**)

I. (:1-9) CONSPIRING AGAINST DANIEL – GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS COME UNDER ATTACK

A. (:1-3) Administration of the Kingdom

1. (:**1-2**) Delegation of Authority

> "*It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they should be in charge of the whole kingdom, 2 and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss.*"

John MacArthur: They were responsible to prevent loss from military revolts, tax evasion, or fraud.

John Goldingay: In Darius's time the satraps were the king's viceroys in each of the provinces, responsible for security and for the collecting of tribute; "satrap" means "protector of the realm." But here "satraps" must denote officials in a looser sense, perhaps government officials generally.

2. (:**3**) Distinguishing of Daniel

> "*Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.*"

Daniel was elevated to a very high position in the kingdom; the other native Babylonian leaders were jealous of his power

John MacArthur: Apparently, God wanted him in the place of influence to encourage and assist in the Jews' return to Judah, since the return was made in Cyrus' first year (539-537 B.C.), right before the lions' den incident.

Warren Wiersbe: They opposed Daniel for several reasons, including just plain envy; but their main concern was financial. They knew that with Daniel in charge, they wouldn't be able to use their offices for personal profit and would lose their share of the graft that could go into their pockets. It's also likely that these younger men resented an older man – and a Jewish exile at that – telling them what to do and checking on their work.

B. (:4-5) Accusations by Daniel's Envious Enemies

1. (:**4**) No Legitimate Faults

> "*Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him.*"

Quite a contrast to the political leaders we are familiar with today where corruption is rampant and it is relatively easy to find fault

Iain Duguid: Daniel's goodness did not win him friends on all sides. Instead, his faithfulness to his duty to God and man made him powerful enemies. Some sought to bring him down, probably both because they were jealous of his success and because his incorruptibility was restricting their ability to use the system for their own personal benefit. . .

Pilgrims remember these things. Pilgrims understand that this world is not our home, and that therefore we shouldn't be surprised if our welcome here is less than warm (**1 Peter 2:11**). When Daniel's enemies brought the charge against him before the king, they called him "*Daniel, the exile from Judah*" (**Dan. 6:13**). They meant it as an insult,

a slur that after all these years of living in Babylon, he was still essentially foreign and therefore untrustworthy. His deepest loyalties lay elsewhere. In fact, this was the highest commendation they could have given him. After all these years, even though Daniel served the empire faithfully, Babylon was not his home. He was nothing more and nothing less than a pilgrim there. His citizenship was elsewhere (cf. **Phil. 3:20**).

2. (:**5**) Looking for a Religious Snare

> "*Then these men said, 'We shall not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God.'*"

Bruce Hurt: *Integrity* (from "integer" = the whole of anything, a whole number not a fraction - think "whole character" not a fraction of one!) speaks of the unimpaired state of one's mind and heart, of moral soundness and purity, of incorruptness, of uprightness, of honesty. Just as we would talk about a whole number, so also we can talk about a whole person who is undivided. A person of integrity is living rightly, not divided, nor being a different person in different circumstances. A person of integrity is the same person in private that he or she is in public. Integrity has the same root word as does the word integrated. A leader of integrity has taken the principles that govern his life, internalized them, and integrated them into every area of his life. Integrity is not like a weathervane that changes direction with every shift of the social winds, as Daniel will soon dramatically demonstrate.

C. (:6-10) Appeal to the King's Ego to Trap Daniel

> "*Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him as follows: 'King Darius, live forever! 7 All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den. 8 Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked.' 9 Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction.*"

Andrew Hill: The test matches Daniel's unquestioned loyalty to the state against his loyalty to God in an attempt to show "how his devotion to his job might be compromised when it is pitted against commitment to his religion" (Seow, 89; cf. Wallace, 114–15, on the "law-and-order trap"). The recommendation to the king is made all the more persuasive by the exaggerated claim that "*all*" the subordinate officials, from royal administrator, prefect, satrap, adviser, to governor, have endorsed the proposed edict (**v.7**).

This ploy by the conspirators is obviously designed to play on the king's pride—"to boost his ego and give expression to his new authority" (Baldwin, 128). The narrative reports the episode by ascribing a sense of urgency among the petitioners, who seek the immediate issuing of the decree in writing (**v.8**). Presumably they fear the king may see

through their devious scheme if given time for thoughtful reflection on the matter.

II. (:10-15) CATCHING DANIEL IN VIOLATION OF THE DECREE – GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS MUST REMAIN LOYAL IN THE FACE OF DANGER

A. (:10-13) Man of Integrity

1. (:**10-11**) Guilty of a Consistent Pattern of Prayer

a. (:**10**) Consistent Pattern of Prayer

> "*Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.*"

Quite a pattern of disciplined worship and prayer

Iain Duguid: Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, "*giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before*" (**Dan. 6:10**). There was no biblical command that required Daniel to seek God in this way, but he had made a habit of doing so. As a result, what is remarkable in his behavior is not so much that the crisis drove him to his knees, but rather that it didn't break his regular routine of prayer. He didn't hide himself away in an inner room to pray, in the hopes of remaining undiscovered. When prayer becomes fashionable, praying in secret may be a good thing, but when prayer is proscribed, to pray in private becomes an act of cowardice. It would mean pretending that we are complying with a decree that seeks to write God out of our lives, and this was something Daniel was not willing to do. . .

Daniel faced Jerusalem three times daily and asked for mercy for his people and for himself from God, the great King. He sought the restoration of the Lord's people to the Lord's land and, doubtless, on this particular occasion he also asked for mercy for himself in his hour of need. He trusted in God's Word and placed his confidence in God's promises.

John Walvoord: Daniel in his prayer life followed the inspired instructions of Jeremiah addressed to the elders, priests, prophets, and all the people of the captivity (**Jer 29:1**) . . . The custom of praying toward the temple in Jerusalem was adopted by Solomon (cf. **2 Ch 6:34-39**) and continued until the new instruction given by Christ to the Samaritan woman in **John 4:20-24**. Prayer thrice daily is mentioned in a Psalm of David (**Ps 55:16-17**).

Donald Campbell: Daniel 6 sets before us the example of a man who possessed the "invisible means of support," the "inner resources" that gave purpose to his life, molded his conduct, and sustained him in adversity. Contemporary man would do well to study again this well-known episode and learn the secrets of living happily in a stress-filled society.

b. (:**11**) Conspiracy to Charge Daniel with Violation of King's Decree

"*Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.*"

2. (:**12-13**) Getting the King to Condemn Daniel

a. (:**12**) Laying the Trap

"*Then they approached and spoke before the king about the king's injunction, 'Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions' den?' The king answered and said, 'The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked.'*"

b. (:**13**) Springing the Trap

"*Then they answered and spoke before the king, 'Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day.'*"

B. (:14-15) King in a Bind

1. (:**14**) Looking for a Loophole

"*Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him.*"

2. (:**15**) Locked Into His Legislation

"*Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, 'Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed.'*"

III. (:16-18) CONFINING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN – GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS CAN FIND THEMSELVES IN THE LIONS' DEN

A. (:16a) Abandonment

"*Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den.*"

Warren Wiersbe: The lions' den was a large pit divided by a moveable wall that could be pulled up to allow the lions to go from one side to the other. The keeper would put food in the empty side and lift up the wall so the lions would cross over and eat. He would quickly lower the wall and clean the safe side of the pit. The animals weren't fed often or great amounts of food so that their appetites would be keen in case there was to be an execution.

B. (:16b) Assurance

"*The king spoke and said to Daniel, 'Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you.'*"

Stephen Miller: the fact that Darius believed it was even possible that Daniel could be saved indicates that the prophet must have been telling the king of the great miracles the God of Israel had performed. Daniel's testimony not only would have included Yahweh's miracles in Babylon but also wonders from Israel's past like the dividing of the sea when Israel escaped from Egypt.

Another observation from this verse is that Daniel must have set an outstanding example. Darius characterized Daniel as "*serving*" his God "*continually*." He had noticed Daniel's lifestyle. In order for believers to impress the world, they must live a consistent Christian life.

C. (:17) Authentication

"*And a stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing might be changed in regard to Daniel.*"

D. (:18) Anxiety

"*Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.*"

IV. (:19-24) CELEBRATING DANIEL'S DELIVERANCE – GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS TESTIFY TO GOD'S DELIVERANCE

A. (:19-20) Trepidation of the King

1. (:**19**) Investigation

"*Then the king arose with the dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den.*"

2. (:**20**) Inquiry

"*And when he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, 'Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?'*"

Tremper Longman III: In this story in Daniel, God overruled the evil intentions of the conspirators and the powerlessness of Darius in order to illustrate to countless generations of his people that he is able to save his people in the midst of the most dire circumstances. We must ask what we face that surpasses the danger Daniel faced. Moreover, as we will see, we have a much stronger basis for faith in the midst of suffering and the threat of death than Daniel did.

B. (:21-22) Testimony of Daniel

"*Then Daniel spoke to the king, 'O king, live forever! 22 My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime.* "'

Andrew Hill: Daniel's vindication is acknowledged at two levels. First, he is found "*innocent*" before God (**v.22a**); and second, his survival of the lion-pit ordeal proves he is guiltless of any wrongdoing before the king ("*I have committed no crime*," NASB; **v.22b**). According to Lucas, 144, the word "*innocent*" (Aram. *zākû*) is a legal term signifying formal acquittal, probably borrowed from Akkadian (cf. CAD, 21:23–25). Redditt, 111, notes that technically Daniel "was guilty of breaking the king's law, but was not disloyal to the king in so doing." The narrator reports both the king's joy at discovering Daniel has survived the ordeal (**v.23a**) and the reason for it—"*he had trusted in his God*" (**v.23b**; on the "ordeal" in the biblical world see Longman, 163). The verbal root for "*trust*" (Aram./Heb. *'mn*; GK 586. 10041) means to "*have faith, to believe*" in theological contexts in the sense of "*standing fast*" (cf. THAT, 1:142). Wood, 173, deduces that "the mention of trust at this point suggests that after their inspection, the examiners came to recognize this trust as having accounted for the miracle."

C. (:23-24) Turnaround by the King

1. (:**23**) Release of Daniel

"*Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.*"

Warren Wiersbe: However, it must be pointed out that not every faithful servant of the Lord is delivered from trial and death in some miraculous way (**Hebrews 11:1-36**).

John Goldingay: Daniel's adversaries have attempted to make it impossible for him to remain innocent before God and loyal to the state, but they have failed. He has obeyed God rather than the human king, but he has done no injury to the state. He has not been guilty of rebellion or treachery. By putting loyalty to God above loyalty to the state he has been loyal to the truth and thus more loyal to the state than those who make of it more than it is—and certainly than those who use it to serve their own ends, as his adversaries have. It is appropriate for the king to be glad that his attempt at execution has failed.

2. (:**24**) Retribution Against Daniel's Accusers

"*The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children, and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.*"

John Walvoord: The punishment meted out conforms to the injunction about the treatment of false witnesses in the law (**Deu 19:16-21**). This principle of *lex talionis* is also illustrated in the case of Haman (**Est 7:9-10**).

John MacArthur: The judgment of God was also an important detail in the miracle, lest some critic suggest the lions were tame or toothless or not hungry.

V. (:25-28) CATECHIZING DANIEL'S GOD – GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS IMPACT OTHERS FOR GOD WHILE ENJOYING UNPRECEDENTED FAVOR

A. (:25-27) Salvation Belongs to the Sovereign God

> "*Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language who were living in all the land: 'May your peace abound! 26 I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever. 27 He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.*'"

Andrew Hill: The decree of Darius serves two purposes: first, it gives official sanction to the God of the Hebrews as a legitimate and even superior deity to the gods of the Babylonian pantheon; and second, it rescinds the "irrevocable" edict that Darius had earlier published forbidding petition to anyone but the king (cf. Redditt, 112). How ironic, as Seow, 95, observes, that "now the king himself publicizes to the world the reversal of his supposedly unchangeable edict, for God has brought about the change."

Stephen Miller: The **purpose of miracles** is set forth in this passage. Miracles are not wrought by God to "show off" but to demonstrate to a lost world that he is the true God and should be honored. Neither was Daniel delivered primarily for his own benefit but so that the Lord could manifest to a lost king and a lost world his reality and power (cf. **Exod 20:18–20; Deut 2:25; Josh 2:9**).

B. (:28) Success Enjoyed by Daniel

> "*So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*"

* * * * * * * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) How did a foreigner like Daniel rise to such a place of prominence in the kingdom?

2) What types of unjust accusations and pressure from a corrupt world system have you

faced?

3) Who spent a more peaceful night – Daniel of the king?

4) Why didn't the king just pardon Daniel instead of throwing him into the lions' den?

* * * * * * * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

John Walvoord: This chapter is profound illustration of how God cares for His people. Although historical and to be accepted in its literal portrayal of an event, it is also parabolic like **chapter 3** and is a foreshadowing of the ultimate deliverance of the people of Israel from their persecutors in the time of the great tribulation at the end of the times of the Gentiles. When the power of God is finally demonstrated at the second coming of Christ, the persecutors of Israel and the enemies of God will be judged wand destroyed much like the enemies of Daniel. Like Daniel, however, the people of God in persecution must remain true regardless of the cost.

Warren Wiersbe: Daniel has a message for God's people today who are being attacked by the enemy and suffering because of their righteous stand for the Lord. Whether we face the fiery furnace (**1 Peter 1:6-8; 4:12-19**) or the roaring lion (**5:8-10**), we are in the Lord's care and He will work out His divine purposes for His glory.

Ray Pritchard: The book of Daniel tells us how to live for God in a hostile environment. His example shows us that it can be done but not without discomfort. If you don't compromise, you are sure to come into trouble sooner or later. The story of Daniel and the lion's den reminds us that there is a spiritual battle raging all around us. The devil himself is like a roaring lion who would devour us if he could (**1Pe 5:8-note**).

Therefore, it should not surprise us if the devil has an army of supporters whose major call in life is to harass us, trick us, and trip us up if they can. You can tell a lot about a person by the quality of his enemies. Daniel must have been a good man because he had the right kind of enemies. The people who hated him were no friends of God. They came after his faith because they could find no fault in him, and they had no answer for what he believed.

Bruce Hurt:

DANIEL WAS A MAN OF CHARACTER - Da 6:1-3

He had an "excellent spirit".

DANIEL WAS A MAN OF CONSISTENCY - Da 6:4-9

He was faithful. There was no accusation possible against the man, unless he was accused about his God. His enemies plotted to undermine him by putting him in a position of possible compromise concerning his God.

DANIEL WAS A MAN OF CONVICTION - Da 6:10-15

Daniel continued to worship his God in spite of the threat of persecution.

He continued to do what was right!

DANIEL WAS A MAN OF CONSCIENCE - Da 6:16-22

After being falsely accused and spending the night in the lion's den, Daniel still had a clean conscience. He could honestly say, "Oh King I have done no hurt."

DANIEL WAS A MAN OF COURAGE - Da 6:23

He had believed in his God and stood firm for Him.

Peter Wallace: **Daniel in the Lions' Den**

1. The Law of God and the Law of the Medes and the Persians (v1-9)

It might seem odd at first that Daniel would receive a high position in the Persian government. After all you might think those who had been high officials in the Babylonian government would be considered dangerous by the Persian government!! But when you look at the practice of ancient kings, one of the ways that you avoid rebellion and revolution is by co-opting the high officials of the prior government, bringing them into your government in order to provide continuity – in order to make people "happy" and content with your rule! The old royal family will be largely exterminated – but the old aristocracy will be largely appeased by patronage and inclusion in the new government. And especially someone like Daniel!

After all, Daniel is a foreigner. He has no particular allegiance to Babylon – but he has been a part of the Babylonian establishment for nearly 70 years. He is an old man – and therefore not likely to have the energy to foment rebellion! – but he is well-versed in negotiating the ins and outs of the city. Further, he "prophesied" the fall of Belshazzar and the triumph of the Medes and Persians. As such, he would likely be viewed as "pro-Persian" by the new rulers.

Of course, most of the high officials of Babylon would have been pro-Babylonian. If they resented Daniel before – when he was honored by their kings – now they are really bothered! And now they have a foreign king who may not really understand the intricacies of Babylonian life – so maybe they can use this to their advantage! So they start by looking carefully for some ground for complaint or fault against Daniel.

(vs. 4) -- Most of the time, you can find something wrong with people in power. Especially in a day before double-entry bookkeeping, it can be really easy to accuse someone of fraud or corruption – and even if they are innocent, the facts can make them look guilty. But Daniel was careful – he was faithful – he was diligent in his labors, and so nor error or fault was found in him. He was blameless. That doesn't mean that he never sinned. It just means that in his conduct as a ruler, he remained above reproach in all his dealings. This is the standard that we use today for pastors, elders, and deacons.

I think of a case in a sister church where an elder decided to declare himself a "sovereign citizen" (in other words, that he was his own country – and therefore he renounced his U.S. citizenship, and refused to pay any more federal, state, or local taxes!). When the case was brought to the presbytery, the presbytery declared that such a man was not fit to be an elder, since he refused to give honor to whom honor was due!

Daniel provides us with an excellent example of how a godly man should engage in an ungodly society. Since Daniel believed that the Most High God rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will, therefore, Daniel will serve whatever king God places over him, and seek the welfare of the city. The Christian church does not seek revolution – it does not seek to overthrow the rulers of this age. Rather, we seek reform – we seek to call the rulers of this age to repentance and faith – so that the rulers of this age may prosper and flourish under the mighty hand of God! And because of that, the only way for our enemies to come against us should be by focusing on our religion:

(vs. 5-9) -- And this is where a real conflict can be found! The Law of Daniel's God does conflict with the laws of the nations! First, it's important to note what is forbidden: "*whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days*…" This does not forbid all religious worship of the gods (the priests of Marduk would never have gone along with this; even their hatred for Daniel would not convince them to suspend their regular sacrifices…) Further, this does not say that the King is a god. (after all, whether this is Cyrus or Gubaru, a Persian king would be a worshiper of Ahura Mazda – "the Lord of Wisdom" in Zoroastrian teaching). Persian religion did not consider the king to be a god – but the king was seen as mediator and representative of the gods.

And while the decree is somewhat unusual – it is entirely in keeping with the sorts of things that kings did when they were establishing their authority over a new realm. Even though Cyrus was a worshiper of Ahura Mazda, when he took the throne of Babylon, he commissioned what is now called "the Cyrus cylinder" – which declares that Marduk (the god of Babylon) had established him as king. And as he is establishing his authority and his right to rule, it would not at all be surprising to have a temporary injunction like this one. Any petition which one would ordinarily make to the gods must come through Cyrus (or Darius as he is named here). He is the one mediator between the gods and man!

And then the courtiers seek to bind Darius to this decree – to prevent him from revoking it – once he realizes why they have recommended it! And so they appeal to the "*law of the Medes and the Persians which cannot be revoked.*" Now, there is a little bit of a problem here: Namely, there is no record in Persian or Babylonian lore of this whole idea that "a law of the Medes and the Persians cannot be revoked." The only place you find this idea is in the Jewish writings of Esther and Daniel! So what's going on here?

I would suggest that this is not a verbatim transcript of the conversation between the king and his courtiers. Rather, this is Daniel's summary of the point of the conversation between the king and his courtiers! Ancient historians regularly used dialogue to communicate the point of what had happened. There is no reason why biblical historians could not have done the same. The Bible never says that we have verbatim transcripts of what people said. Rather, the Bible says that what it teaches is true. The conversations recorded in scripture are true and accurate in terms of telling us what happened – even if they don't use the exact words that were said at the time. (I know that some people think that the Holy Spirit guaranteed that the human authors wrote

down the exact transcript of what was said – the only problem with that view is that scripture never tells us this! Scripture never says that the Holy Spirit guarantees a verbatim transcript of all conversations!) What scripture guarantees is that every word in scripture is the true and faithful word of God. (Just think of how the Gospels often give us the same story told in different words – sometimes even in slightly different order. If you insist on verbatim conversations and absolute chronological consistency, then you wind up with Peter denying Jesus 9 times – instead of three times!

If we take the Gospels as our standard – then we can see how the book of Daniel may using a sort of hyperbole in its language about the Laws of the Medes and the Persians. Because what you see here is how the Book of Daniel pits the Law of the Medes and the Persians against the Law of Daniel's God. Whose Law will stand? Whose decree cannot be revoked? And even more, whose Law is the standard by which all other laws are judged? So, however the decree of Darius was worded, the effect of the decree was to forbid all petitions that did not go through the King! For thirty days, the King alone was the mediator between god and man.

2. Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem (v10-11)
When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, Curious. Maybe the courtiers thought that all this had been done behind Daniel's back, but Daniel knew all about their plots. And it did not change his habits. He did not go to the King and try to overturn it. Neither did he try to keep his religious practices secret. After all, if he even appeared to honor the King's decree, he would be denying his God before men!

I have a friend who has taught in North Korea. Yes, you heard that right. North Korea. There are Christians there! But many Christians have compromised their witness by bowing before the statue of Kim-il-Sung. They justify it by saying that in oriental culture, you bow to all sorts of people! But such logic would have resulted in Daniel's three friends bowing to the image. And it would have resulted in Daniel bringing his petitions first to Darius.

But Daniel does not compromise his witness. He does as he has always done: he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. Here is this octogenarian getting down on his knees as he has every day, three times a day, for over 70 years.

Do you want to have the courage to stand in the face of danger the way that Daniel did? Then you should adopt the pattern of life that Daniel did! Habits are really important – but not just mindless habits – intentional, self-conscious habits! Habits that flow out of a disposition and character that is formed by the Holy Spirit. Think about what Daniel is doing! Three times a day he prays at a window that faces Jerusalem. **Psalm 55:16-17** says, "*But I call to God, and the LORD will save me. Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice*."

Daniel has been shaped by this pattern of worship, and he will not change – even at the

cost of his own life! And he prays toward Jerusalem – just as Solomon had said. When Solomon dedicated the temple, he had prayed that God would hear his prayers – and that God would hear the prayers of all who prayed toward this place. Therefore, all throughout Israel's history, they prayed toward the temple. Orthodox synagogues to this day will orient the congregation toward Jerusalem! Many in the early church insisted on facing east when they prayed remembering the original Garden sanctuary in Eden – in the east. But the point of the New Testament is that our sanctuary is oriented toward the heavens – since we worship not in an earthly sanctuary, but in the heavenly holy of holies!

Have you noticed how important the temple is in the book of Daniel? We have see it several times already. First, in the capture of the temple vessels in **chapter 1** – along with the concern about food that would defile them – and in chapter 5 that theme came back around, as Belshazzar defiled the temple vessels, and fell under God's judgment. Likewise, in **chapter 2**, we saw a stone cut from a mountain by no human hand (and the theme of the temple-mountain is strong in apocalyptic writings). Here, Daniel prays toward Jerusalem – toward the ruined temple.

As one commentator put it, "the ideas about the presence of God in the Temple and the future coming of God's kingdom as expressed in the liturgy… are also very much the substance of apocalyptic thinking" (from Gillingham, 151 – p2) The holy mountain theme (Jerusalem) in the book of Daniel is a polemic against Babylonian and Persian pretensions – a counter-claim in favor of God's future plans for Jerusalem. "In the midst of Babylonian [and Persian] idolatry those who in the end are called the truly wise adhere to their faith and their cult [their worship] as a matter of spiritual and, eventually, even physical survival." (47)

The patterns and rhythms of the liturgy – even if it is only a liturgy of one man! – are what help Daniel to remain faithful for 70 years under pagan rule. Some people want to emphasize only the inward disposition – but is like the husband who says that his love for his wife is expressed solely in his heart attitude toward her – and therefore an outward show of affection is irrelevant! As Dale Ralph Davis says well, "A fellow like that deserves a skillet to the brain to get him to think properly" (88)

But what do you suppose did Daniel pray? We are told in **chapter 9**. (Maybe this wasn't the same day – but it was at least the same year!) Daniel's prayer is given us as a sort of pattern for us. It is a reminder that we should not be selfish in our prayers, but we should pray for the peace of Jerusalem. We should see ourselves in the light of what God is doing in history – and thus pray for one another in that light!

Verse 11 then is striking to us: *11 Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God.* I remember a children's Bible in my youth that pictured the courtiers standing outside – looking at Daniel praying by his window! But we only think that way, because we think of houses as "private." There was nothing preventing these men from walking into Daniel's house and finding him making petition and plea before his God. And Daniel does nothing to stop them! He will not

hide his allegiance to the God of Heaven! At the same time, also note that Daniel does not flaunt his refusal to obey the King's edict He does not go into the King's throne room and do his devotions there! No, he simply continues his long-standing pattern of humble faithfulness. After all, Daniel has always been a faithful servant to his king. He has demonstrated by his words and his actions that service to the Most High God results in the honor and well-being even of pagan kings! Love for God and neighbor demands nothing less! But those who hate God will end up hating man as well!

3. Put Not Your Trust in Princes (v12-18)
And so the courtiers bring their evidence before the King! Daniel – one of the exiles from Judah – continues to petition his God three times a day! Notice that they do not say, "Daniel, one of the three presidents you appointed!" No, they highlight his status as a foreigner – an outsider – someone expendable! (at least in their eyes!)

There is a certain sense in which our author is poking fun at Darius! This powerful king who thought that he alone could be the mediator between god and man is now left helpless against the machinations of his courtiers!! Undoubtedly there was much more that was said and done, and our text summarizes it in very simple words – but the point is clear! The courtiers had maneuvered the King into a corner, and now Darius must order Daniel to be thrown into the lions' den!

Put no confidence in princes! The Psalmists had said this many times! And Daniel's trust is not in mortal men – but in the God of Heaven! And Darius understands that – at least in some sense. Indeed, from what we know of Zoroastrian thought, **verses 16-18** are very much of what we would have expected from a Persian king: Notice that there is nothing said about Daniel's experience! Why is all the focus on Darius? Think about the effect of **verses 16-18**. Dale Ralph Davis says this well: "[the] depiction [of Darius] is intentional: as if to say, rulers may not be personally hostile to you, but, even if they favour you, you dare not pin your hopes on them, for they can prove as helpless as anyone else." (p89)

Darius has such respect for Daniel (and Daniel's God) that he does three things: first, he declares his affirmation that Daniel's God will deliver him (the ESV – like most English translations, cannot believe that a pagan king would say this, but the Aramaic is very clear: "*Your God, whom you serve continually, he will deliver you*.") Second, he seals the mouth of the den "*that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel*" – in other words, if Daniel's God delivers him from the lions, as Darius expects, the King does not want anyone else taking matters into their own hands! And third, Darius spends the night fasting. Ordinarily there would be "diversions" – entertainments of various kinds. But Darius is so concerned for Daniel that he spends the night in sleepless fasting. You might say, "If he trusts God, then he should get a good night's sleep!" But that's not the way God works. God works through our prayers. Think of it this way: you've heard the old line – "don't pray for patience, God might give it to you!" But what happens if you don't pray for patience? God may very well give it to you anyway! So why pray? Because if you pray, then when God teaches you patience, you will receive it as his blessing! Whereas, if you don't pray, then it will come in the

form of chastisement – of discipline. Darius may not have known how to pray – but he knew how to fast – how to humble himself before God and implore his mercy! Thus, the irony of the story is that the king is found humbly petitioning God – the king who at the beginning of the chapter was declared to be the only one to whom petitions could come! Do not trust in princes! Do not trust in political parties – do not trust rulers – even when they are well-disposed to you. They are mortal men who cannot save! But salvation belongs to the LORD!

4. Salvation Belongs to the LORD (v19-28)
No sooner does Darius see the eastern sky begin to change, than he hastened to the den – and he calls out to Daniel – and for the first (and only) time in our chapter, we hear what Daniel says **(:21-22**). We hear nothing of Daniel's emotional state – nor of the details of what had happened in the den. Rather, we hear a simple confession of God's mighty deeds: "*My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths*." And we hear the reason for this: "*they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before [my God]; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm*."

Notice that Daniel does not pretend that he was innocent. He acknowledges that he was guilty of violating the king's edict! But he makes the more basic claim – I have done you no harm. The Christian may not always be able to obey the laws of the land. There may be times when the Christian must say, "*We must obey God rather than man*." But even when we do – we must also insist that we do no harm to our rulers!

(:23-24) -- Then the king – having fulfilled the letter of his unjust law – now takes vengeance on those who had prompted it! This was the outcome that they had not foreseen! But this is the inevitable fate of those who conspire to destroy the innocent. Sooner or later, they will fall into the trap that they set for others! In this case, it was sooner! After all, they are dealing with the most powerful King in the world. And they have raised his wrath against them! So those who had maliciously accused Daniel are themselves thrown to the lions – together with their wives and children. (God's law did not permit children to be killed for the sins of the parents – but then again, Darius does not know God's law!) The basic lesson here is that those who desecrate God's temple will pay… and, as Paul will say centuries later, 'you are that temple.'

Our passage closes with another edict. This time from King Darius. It is quite similar to the edict of Nebuchadnezzar – which may suggest that both kings requested Daniel to draft them! **(:25-28)** -- We know very little about Cyrus's religious views. I will simply say that on the premise of God's promise to Abraham, that those who bless you I will bless – we can at least hope that Cyrus will fare well at the final judgment. And at the final judgment *every knee will bow – and every tongue confess – that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father*! And so let us begin now! Because Salvation belongs to the LORD!

John MacArthur: **What are the lessons we learn about a man of God?**
(1) He transcends history.

(2) He lives a consistent life from youth to old age and this makes for great usefulness in his old age.
(3) He utterly fulfills his calling. In other words, he lives in the absolute center of God's will. His only desire is that God's will be fulfilled.
(4) He has a right attitude. They kept saying about him he has an excellent spirit… he has an excellent spirit.
(5) He will be envied and he will be hated by the world around him, but he will never be embittered by it.
(6) He is condemned but if he is condemned, he is condemned for his righteousness for there's no other flaw, he is as an elder of the church should be… what?… blameless.
(7) He is known for his virtue and integrity even by his enemies.
(8) He is a faithful citizen. He is subject to human laws until they would cause him to violate the laws of God.
(9) He is willing to face any consequence within the framework of God's will and leave the outcome to God.
(10) He will serve faithfully no matter what it costs him personally.
(11) He never defends himself. He leaves that to God.
(12) He strengthens the faith of others giving them hope in God. Didn't you see this in the king? I mean, the king was even believing because of the great faith of Daniel.
(13) He is delivered from all harm and he is preserved for every purpose within the will of God.
(14) He is a vehicle for God's glory. I wish we could just preach on that. We… we as Christians are to be, above all things, a vehicle for God's glory.
(15) He will be avenged by God. His enemies will be dealt with by God, he doesn't have to deal with them himself.
(16) He is exalted by those around him as well as by the One above him.
Principles manifest in this chapter that show the virtuous life of a man of God.
(Source: *Daniel in the Lions' Den*)

John Goldingay: Daniel is a new kind of Jewish hero. At the conclusion of the stories, we might look back and sum up the picture of their hero that we have been given. He is one who:

- acts with conviction (**1:8–14**),
- is given "*knowledge and skill*" from God, in literature and insight (**1:17**),
- is exceptionally wise and understanding (**1:20**),
- can speak with "*prudence and discretion*" (**2:14**),
- turns to God when confronted with difficulty (**2:18**),
- attributes to God not to his own insight his receipt of revelation (**2:30**),
- is recognized by Nebuchadnezzar as "*endowed with a spirit of the holy, divine gods*" (**4:8, 18**),
- is willing to speak truth to power even when the prospect distresses and terrifies him (**4:19–26**),
- counsels Nebuchadnezzar to break off his wrongdoing by doing right (**4:27**),
- is possessed of "*an excellent spirit*" according to the queen mother (**5:12**),
- has a reputation for enlightenment, understanding, and insight (**5:14**),
- refuses to accept rewards for his interpretive work (**5:17**),

- is distinguished in his work in Darius's government because he has "*an excellent spirit*" (**6:3**),
- is beyond reproach in terms of his work: neither negligent nor corrupt (**6:4**),
- values prayer more highly than obedience to the (civil) law (**6:10**),
- and trusts in God (**6:23**).

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **Liars, Laws, and Lions: Glorifying God in a Hostile World**

I. We glorify God through being <u>Persecuted Unjustly</u> for our Righteousness
God is glorified when we show courage.

II. We glorify God in a Hostile World through <u>Prayer</u>
When we are consistent and undeterred in our prayer life, God gets glory.
How consistent are you in prayer? What does it take to deter you from praying, from doing what you should do?

III. We glorify God in a Hostile World When We Commit Ourselves to God for His <u>Protection</u>
God is glorified when we commit ourselves to him and he miraculously delivers us. Now, let me just say in fairness, that doesn't always happen. God doesn't always deliver us. The important part is, is that we have faith. God is glorified in the faith that we have in him. That's what glorifies God. No matter what happens, Daniel was not going to compromise.

IV. We glorify God in a Hostile World when <u>God's Greatness is Proclaimed</u> because of our Testimony
Illustration of conversion of C. I. Scofield.

TEXT: Daniel 7:1-28

TITLE: DREAMS OF THE FOUR GREAT BEASTS, THE ANCIENT OF DAYS, THE SON OF MAN AND THE ANTICHRIST

BIG IDEA:
SUCCESSIVE EVIL EMPIRES DOMINATE THE WORLD SCENE UNTIL GOD REIGNS VICTORIOUS WITH HIS SAINTS IN HIS KINGDOM

INTRODUCTION:

Stephen Miller: For a variety of reasons, "modern commentators are generally agreed that **chapter 7** is the single most important chapter of the Book of Daniel." Porteous calls it "the heart of the Book of Daniel," and Heaton declares, "It would be no exaggeration to say that this chapter is one of the most important passages of the OT."

Why is this chapter so significant?

- First, **Dan 7** marks the literary turning point of the book from historical accounts to visions. J. J. Collins correctly understands **Dan 7** to be "a transitional chapter" bound to the preceding stories "by the use of the Aramaic language and by affinities with **ch. 2**, but tied to the following visions by its subject matter." Thus this passage effectively joins the two parts of the book together.
- Second, the chapter is important because of its enormous impact on subsequent Jewish literature. As a matter of fact, the whole body of **apocalyptic material** that followed was influenced by this vision.
- Third, it is of extreme significance **prophetically**. Walvoord rightly maintains: "As interpreted by conservative expositors, the vision of Daniel provides the most comprehensive and detailed prophecy of future events to be found anywhere in the Old Testament."

A question often posed concerning **predictive prophecy** is, If these visions relate to the future, what **significance** could they have had for the people of Daniel's day? Were they **relevant** to those who first heard them? God's messages through his prophet were of the utmost value to Daniel and his people, for through them God assured the Jews that the nation of Israel would endure. This issue was uppermost in the mind of every religious Israelite. After Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, the Jews were taken into captivity, and the nation of Israel ceased to exist. Even when the small group under Zerubbabel returned to Judah, the future of the nation was uncertain. But God made clear to the Jewish people through the prophet Daniel that Israel would continue to have a place in history, that their promised Messiah would come and deliver them from spiritual and national bondage, and that the Messiah would set up his kingdom and reign over the nations with Israel raised to a place of prominence. Moreover, just as believers today are unaware of the exact time of the coming of the Lord, so Old Testament saints did not know when Daniel's prophecies would be fulfilled. Eschatological promises of a better world have always encouraged believers in the here and now.

Paul Lederach: Without question, **chapter seven** is the high point in the book of Daniel. It is pivotal in that it completes the Aramaic tract to the nations (**2:4b—7:28**) and at the same time with its vision (or dream), sets the stage for the visions that follow. The stories in **chapters 1-6** relate to Daniel and his friends. The visions beginning with **chapter 7** are reported to have come to Daniel in his old age. . .

Chapter 7 is also a fitting introduction to the visions and themes found in **chapters 8-12**. In each of the visions, a heavenly messenger provides understanding. In **chapter 7**, this figure is an attendant standing in the heavenly court (**7:16**). In the two succeeding visions, the archangel Gabriel provides understanding (**8:16; 9:22**). In the final vision, a celestial being (Gabriel) comes to make Daniel understand (**10:10-14**).

Each of the visions tells of the coming of a dreadful king who will oppress the people of God (**7:24-25; 8:23-24; 9:27; 11:29-45**). This is the meaning or the truth concerning the fourth beast (**7:19**). The activity of this evil king is developed in each of the visions. Each vision indicates that God's people will be severely oppressed for a limited time (**7:25; 8:14; 9:27; 12:7**). Each of the visions predicts the end of this arrogant king (**7:11; 8:25; 9:27; 11:45**). In the visions that follow **chapter 7**, God's offer of grace to the world is rejected by the kings of the world. However, in the midst of tempestuous international affairs, there are the faithful, the people of God, the people of grace, who live lives of holiness and peace, led by the wise (**11:33**).

Norman Porteous: The meaning of the chapter is taken to be that the age of the oppressive empires is about to be terminated by the sovereign act of God and that, when his kingdom is brought in, delegated sovereignty will be given to the faithful among the Jews as the people of his choice.

Tremper Longman III: Many of the themes of **chapter 7** will be repeated in **chapters 8–12**. Here are the <u>major themes</u> that reverberate in this section:

- the horror of human evil, particularly as it is concentrated in the state• the announcement of a specific time of deliverance
- repentance that leads to deliverance
- the revelation that a cosmic war stands behind human conflict
- judgment as certain for those who resist God and oppress his people
- the equally certain truth that God's people, downtrodden in the present, will experience new life in the fullest sense.

To conclude by way of summary, **Daniel 7** is a vision of <u>two parts</u>. The first part reveals that the world at present is under the sway of evil and cruel human power. The second part shows us that God is in control and will ultimately judge the rebels and establish his kingdom among us. At present there is **conflict**—indeed, a cosmic war, about which we will learn more particularly in **chapter 10**—between the evil forces of this world and God and his faithful creatures.

John Walvoord: From a literary standpoint, there is good support for the obvious division of the book into the stories (**1-6**) and the visions (**7-12**). . .

Another point of view argued strongly by Robert Culver is that the book of Daniel divides into three major divisions:

(1) introduction, **Daniel 1**;

(2) the times of the Gentiles, presented in Aramaic, he common language of the Gentiles at that time, **Daniel 2-7**; and

(3) Israel in relation to the Gentiles, written in Hebrew, **Daniel 8-12**.

Culver's point of view, which he credits to Auberlen, has much to commend itself and is especially theologically discerning because it distinguishes the two major programs of God in the Old Testament, namely, the program for the Gentiles and the program for Israel. In either point of view, however, **chapter 7** is a highpoint in revelation in the book of Daniel; and, in some sense, the material before as well as the material which follows pivots upon the detailed revelation of this chapter.

(:1) PROLOGUE – DANIEL RECORDS HIS DREAM

"*In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it.*"

Paul Lederach: The dream is so vivid, so disturbing, and with its God-given interpretation so far-reaching in scope and importance that Daniel wrote down the dream (**7:1**). This is said only for this vision in the book of Daniel. It is written so that every detail of the dream with its interpretation, which was also part of the dream, will not be lost.

John Walvoord: In the opening verses of **chapter 7**, Daniel introduces his remarkable experience of having "*a dream and visions of his head upon his bed*" which occurred in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon. The year was probably 553 B.C., fourteen years before the fall of Babylon. Nabonidus, the actual king of Babylon beginning in 556 B.C., had appointed Belshazzar as his coregent in control of Babylonia itself while Nabonidus conducted military maneuvers in Arabia. As Nebuchadnezzar himself had died in 62 B.C, nine years before Belshazzar began to reign, it is clear that the event of **chapter 7** occurred chronologically between **chapters 4** and **5** of Daniel.

John Whitcomb: So this is a **flashback** – certain things God wanted his people to know about Gentile empires, the nation of Israel and the coming Anti-Christ. No more dreams from God in the church age. Daniel was distressed, overwhelmed by God's revelation.

I. (:2-8) DREAM OF THE FOUR GREAT BEASTS AND THE LITTLE HORN

A. (:2-3) Overall Vision Summary of Four Great Beasts

"*Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of*

heaven were stirring up the great sea. 3 And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another."

Iain Duguid: In the Bible, as elsewhere in the ancient Near East, the sea was the symbol of chaos and rebellion against God (see **Ps. 89:9; 93:3–4**). [John Whitcomb: speaks of the human race – **Luke 21:25**]

John Walvoord: In Daniel, **wind** is uniformly used to represent the **sovereign power** of God. . . The history of the Gentiles is the record of God striving with the nations and ultimately bringing them into subjection when Christ returns to reign (**Ps 2**).

Stephen Miller: In this context, however, the figure seems rather to denote factors of all kinds that produce turmoil among the earth's nations throughout history. This must be the case, for the winds continually stir up the sea during the rise and fall of all four empires. God's judgments are involved, but the turmoil described primarily results from the activities of persons who do not know God and the operation of Satan's forces upon humanity. Wood correctly states: "The winds stand for various forces which play upon the nations, serving to bring strife and trouble."

Adherents of the traditional view of Daniel almost unanimously agree that the kingdoms are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome; whereas those who accept the Maccabean thesis usually consider the four empires to be Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece. For reasons stated in the discussion of **chap. 2** and the Introduction, the traditional interpretation is followed here.

John Goldingay: The four creatures emerge from the ocean consecutively, not concurrently. . . Each animal is fierce and dangerous. Each is also ominous in a narrower sense. The first three, at least, are anomalous creatures, resembling one species but also having features belonging to another or being deformed in some other way.

Tremper Longman III: We will argue that, though the vision begins with the Babylonian empire, its multivalent imagery intends to prohibit definite historical identifications with the remaining three beasts. Rather, the fourfold pattern simply informs us that **evil kingdoms will succeed one another (at least seemingly) until the end of time.** The people of God must recognize that this is God's plan and prepare for persecution.

B. (:4-7) Four Successive Fearsome Beasts

1. (:**4**) First Beast Like a Lion with Wings of an Eagle

"*The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it.*"

Stephen Miller: The lion's wings being torn off speaks of the king's insanity and loss of power; standing on two feet like a man and receiving a human heart (mind) denotes Nebuchadnezzar's humanitarian rule after his insanity; and the lion being "*lifted up from the ground*" indicates that it was God who raised the king to his place of honor.

John Goldingay: The features of a lion to which the OT appeals are ferocity, strength, destructiveness, courage, rapacity, and fearsomeness; it can be used as a simile or metaphor for any nation or individual with such characteristics, and in particular to suggest kingship. The eagle's key characteristics are speed and rapacity (**Hab 1:8; Lam 4:19**). The bird referred to is perhaps strictly the large and majestic, high-flying and swooping griffon vulture. Lion and eagle appear together to characterize Saul and Jonathan in **2 Sam 1:23**, the unnamed northern foe in **Jer 4:7, 13**, and Nebuchadnezzar in particular in **Jer 49:19, 22**.

John Whitcomb: Conversion of Nebuchadnezzar pictured here. An animal that becomes like a human – given a new human mind.

2. **(:5)** Second Beast Like a Bear

"*And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!'*"

Paul Lederach: The bear is raised up on one side; perhaps this means that, after the Medes were conquered by the Persians under Cyrus, they played a less-significant role than the Persians in the Medo-Persian empire. Eventually there is a tendency to drop the reference to the Medes and refer to the Persian empire.

John Walvoord: The meaning seems to be that the second empire will be powerful like a bear, ferocious (**Is 13:17-18**), but less majestic, less swift, and less glorious.

Stephen Miller: the view that the bear symbolized the composite Medo-Persian Empire is supported by the description of the empire in **chap. 8**. In **8:3** a ram appears and is identified as "*the kings of Media and Persia*" (**8:20**). It has two horns, one larger than the other, portraying the **twofold division** of the Medo-Persian kingdom. The bear symbolism concerning the two sides with one larger probably should be interpreted in light of the clear passage in **Dan 8.**

The bear "*had three ribs in its mouth*," which may safely be understood to represent the **conquests** of the empire. Since the beasts represent nations or empires, devouring other beasts would symbolize triumph over them. These ribs may denote military triumphs generally or three specific peoples subdued by Medo-Persia. Although Young considers the three ribs to represent "the insatiable nature of the beast ... since, not being content with one body, it devoured many," others (probably correctly) have taken the ribs to represent Medo-Persia's three major conquests—Babylon (539 B.C.), Lydia (546 B.C.), and Egypt (525 B.C.).

"*It was told*" apparently refers to a decree from heaven. "*Get up and eat your fill of flesh*" means that Medo-Persia would subdue many nations. Persian dominion stretched from Egypt and the Aegean on the west to the Indus River on the east. More territory was controlled by this empire than any other up until that time.

John Goldingay: Its size and strength make it a source of fear to human beings second only to the lion: see **1 Sam 17:34–37; Amos 5:19; Prov 28:15**. Indeed, it comes before the lion in **Lam 3:10**; see also **2 Sam 17:8; Isa 11:7; Hos 13:8; Prov 17:2**; and for a vivid instance of its dangerousness, **2 Kgs 2:24**. The bear would be a fit simile for any king or empire; nothing specific associates it with any particular king or empire.

3. (:**6**) Third Beast Like a Leopard

"*After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.*"

Iain Duguid: The third beast was another **composite animal**, part leopard, part bird, with four heads. Such a flying leopard would combine both ferocity and speed, so that no one could run from it, while its four heads would render it capable of seeing in all four directions at once, making it impossible to hide from. This beast was also given authority to rule.

Stephen Miller: Greece is aptly represented by this flying leopard, for its conquests were carried out with lightning speed, and it had an insatiable lust for territory. Alexander the Great invaded Asia Minor in 334 B.C. and within ten short years (by the age of thirty-two) had conquered the entire Medo-Persian Empire to the borders of India. According to legend, he then wept because there were no more lands to conquer. In addition to extraordinary velocity, the "*four*" wings may allude to the four quarters of the earth, thus signifying world domination.

In Scripture "*heads*" may represent rulers or governments (e.g., **2:38; Isa 7:8–9; Rev 13:3, 12**), and that is the case with the leopard's four heads. Daniel predicted that this one empire would ultimately evolve into **four kingdoms**, and this is exactly what occurred. Alexander died in 323 B.C., and after much internal struggle his generals carved the kingdom into four parts:

(1) Antipater, and later Cassander, gained control of Greece and Macedonia;
(2) Lysimachus ruled Thrace and a large part of Asia Minor;
(3) Seleucus I Nicator governed Syria, Babylon, and much of the Middle East (all of Asia except Asia Minor and Palestine); and
(4) Ptolemy I Soter controlled Egypt and Palestine.

A quadripartite character is definitely ascribed to the Greek Empire in the next chapter (cp. **8:8** with **8:21–22**), and it is reasonable to interpret the leopard's "**four heads**" in light of that clear teaching.

4. **(:7)** Fourth Beast Different from the Rest

"*After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast,*

dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns."

John Whitcomb: Repeat in different terms of the image in **Chap. 2** – two legs and two feet and ten toes. Same arrangement of kings = four plus one; second one is a duality (Medo-Persian Empire). The teeth are the same = iron. The Roman Empire about 60 years before Christ was born completely conquered the Macedonian Empire. Rome officially lasted until about 1500 years after Christ; an enormously powerful system. The ten horns haven't appeared yet. The final phase will be ten kingdoms in what is now Western Europe = a united system (cf. currency now of the euro).

Stephen Miller: The incredible might and cruelty of Rome are aptly depicted by Daniel's fourth beast. Just as this monster was "*different*" from all the others, so the Roman Empire differed from those that had preceded it. Rome possessed a power and longevity unlike anything the world had ever known. Nations were crushed under the iron boot of the Roman legions, its power was virtually irresistible, and the extent of its influence surpassed the other three kingdoms.

Andrew Hill: Those identifying the fourth kingdom as the Roman Empire contend the parallels to Nebuchadnezzar's statue dream (**ch. 2**) are more appropriate to this interpretation since the first advent of Jesus the Messiah during the Roman Empire marks the inbreaking of God's kingdom in human history (e.g., Archer, 47–48, 87; cf. 2:44). In addition, the vision of the ram and the goat in **ch. 8** seems further to explain the identity of the second and third creatures of Daniel's vision in **ch. 7** (e.g., Baldwin, 161–62; cf. summary of the Roman period interpretation in J. H. Walton, "*The Four Kingdoms of Daniel*," JETS 29 [1986]: 28).

John Goldingay: In a double contrast with the first three animals, the report does not describe the fourth animal's form and appearance, which has the effect of giving it a touch of mystery and of suggesting that it is even less a mere earthly creature than its lion-like, bear-like, and leopard-like predecessors. And it characterizes the animal by means of active verbs, putting the emphasis on its own deeds; the report thus prepares the way for the action of God that directly confronts its self-initiated action.

John Walvoord: The description of the beast to this point more obviously corresponds to the **Roman Empire** than that of the empire of Alexander the Great. Alexander conquered by the rapidity of troop movements and seldom crushed the people whom he conquered. By contrast, the Roman Empire was ruthless in its destruction of civilizations and peoples, killing captives by the thousands and selling them into slavery by the hundreds of thousands. This hardly is descriptive of either Alexander or the four divisions of his empire which followed. As Leupold states, referring to the iron teeth, "That must surely signify a singularly voracious, cruel, and even vindictive world power. Rome could never get enough of conquest. Rivals like Carthage just had to be broken."

C. (:8) Little Horn Emerges

"*While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts.*"

John Whitcomb: **Is. 27:1** – *Leviathan, the fleeing serpent* = Satan; the dragon, the beast that comes out of the sea = the Antichrist.

Iain Duguid: These beasts represent kings, the authorities that are in control of the world in which we live (**Dan. 7:17**), and so the vision declares that our world is being run by a succession of **fearsome monsters** that will go from bad to worse, each one more frightening than the one before.

Stephen Miller: The fourth beast is symbolic of Rome; therefore the ten horns (kings, **v. 24**) coming out of the fourth beast represent a confederation of kings (kingdoms or nations) that emanate from the old Roman Empire. This federation's dominion will immediately precede the return of Christ, for the empire will be destroyed by the coming of the kingdom of God (cf. **7:11, 13–14, 21–22, 26–27**).

Daniel predicts that the ruler (little horn) of this coalition (ten horns) will be brilliant (eyes like a man) and arrogant (mouth speaking arrogant things). He will conquer three kingdoms (or nations) that will resist him and thereby gain firm control over the whole empire. The picture of this evil, future king in these verses concurs with descriptions of him found in other Scripture passages (cf. **Dan 11:36–37; 2 Thess 2:3–12; Rev 13:5–6**). He is none other than the most infamous person in all of human history—the "**Antichrist**" (so Archer, Young, Leupold, Keil, Walvoord). Centuries ago (ca. A.D. 400) Jerome identified this individual as the Antichrist and described him as "one of the human race, in whom Satan will wholly take up his residence in bodily form."

Although "*ten horns*" may signify that Antichrist's empire will consist of exactly ten kingdoms (or nations), it was shown in the discussion at **2:44** that the number ten might indicate **completeness**, that is, complete in power, sovereignty, and so forth. Thus Daniel predicted that in the last days a powerful empire made up of a confederation of kingdoms or nations will rise out of the ashes of the old Roman Empire. This final empire will have incredible power, for by its force Antichrist will rule the whole earth (cf. **Rev 13:3, 7–8, 12**).

II. (:9-14) DREAM OF THE ANCIENT OF DAYS AND HIS MILLENNIAL DOMINION DELEGATED TO THE SON OF MAN

Roy Beacham: **The Coming Kingdom of God**

- (:**9-10**) The Thrones of God's Judgment
- (:**11-12**) The Demise of Man's Empires

- (:**13-14**) The Establishment of God's Kingdom

A. (:9-10) Vision of the Ancient of Days – Preparation for Judgment

1. **(:9**a) Positioned on the Throne of Judgment

"*I kept looking until thrones were set up,*
And the Ancient of Days took His seat;"

2. (:**9b**) Pictured as Wise and Honorable

"*His vesture was like white snow,*
And the hair of His head like pure wool."

Andrew Hill: The white garments (**v.9b**) symbolize both God's splendor and his purity (so Gowan, 107; cf. **Ps 51:7; Isa 1:18**). The white hair like "*wool*" (**v.9b**) also speaks to God's majesty and splendor as well as to his experience and "old age" (so Lacocque, 143; cf. **Rev 1:14**). Towner, 98, comments that the color white emphasized here depicts God as "a wise and honorable judge."

3. (:**9c-10a**) Prepared to Dispense Fiery Judgment

"*His throne was ablaze with flames,*
Its wheels were a burning fire.
A river of fire was flowing
And coming out from before Him;"

Andrew Hill: Fire not only "represents an awe-inspiring supernatural force" (Gowan, 107) but is also a symbol of God's judgment, destroying everything in its path (**Isa 66:15–16; Jer 21:12; Eze 21:31**; cf. Lucas, 182, who comments on the "dangerous splendor" of fire and its association with divine judgment).

Stephen Miller: There is a startling contrast here. In **vv. 7–8** the Antichrist is blaspheming the God of heaven, but in **vv. 9–10** the sovereign Lord is shown sitting upon his throne, calmly preparing for the day of judgment. Whitcomb comments: "A greater contrast between two connecting verses can hardly be imagined." Montgomery observes that "the scene of the Divine Session with the coming of the Son of Man is appropriately sublime, one which has no equal among the other apocalypses for simplicity and reserve."

4. (:**10b**) Poised to Execute Judgment

a. Angel Attendants

"*Thousands upon thousands were attending Him,*
And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him;"

b. Anticipatory Attention

"*The court sat,*
And the books were opened."

Stephen Miller: The time of this judgment is clear from the context. Since the kingdom of God immediately follows, the judgment of this empire and its leader, the Antichrist, must occur at the time of the second coming of Christ. Many eschatological events are telescoped together in Scripture, however, and it is possible that this judgment may include both that of the Antichrist and his confederates at the beginning of the millennium (cf. **Rev 19:20–21**) and the judgment of Satan and the remainder of the lost at the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ (cf. **Rev 20:10–15**).

John Goldingay: **God's books** sometimes record God's purposes regarding the final issues of history or regarding particular segments of history (cf. the sealed books of 8**:26; 9:24; 10:21; 12:4, 9**). They sometimes record God's expectations of human conduct and his intentions regarding the judgment of humanity in light of how far they fulfill these expectations, or fail to do so (e.g., **1 En. 81; 93:1–3; 103:2; Jub. 5:12–19; 16:9; 23:32**). Any of these significances might be relevant in the present context; the idea of books that contain a citizen list, a list of the people who belong to God (**12:1**), or that record people's deeds and afflictions seems less relevant here. The people whose names would be in God's book have not yet come into focus in the vision, while the deeds that are to be judged are the ones before our eyes in the vision, not ones recorded in books.

B. (:11-12) Vision of Victory over the Little Horn and the Beasts

1. (:**11**) Victory over the Little Horn at Armageddon

"*Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking;*
I kept looking until the beast was slain,
and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire."

2. (:**12**) Victory over the Beasts

"*As for the rest of the beasts,*
their dominion was taken away,
but an extension of life was granted to them
for an appointed period of time."

John Whitcomb: Previous 3 kingdoms were absorbed into the next one; but Rome, the final empire, will have no aftermath; when it ends, it is totally finished.

C. (:13-14) Vision of the Son of Man – Messianic Dominion

1. (:**13**) Son of Man Presented before the Ancient of Days

"*I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.*"

John Whitcomb: A picture of the Father and the Son of God together; very unique passage.

Stephen Miller: **John 12:34** states: "*The crowd spoke up, 'We have heard from the Law that the Christ [the Messiah] will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up*'?" In this passage the terms "*the Christ*" [the Messiah] and "*the Son of Man*" are used interchangeably. It may be inferred that the people of Jesus' day already had come to identify the Danielic "*Son of Man*" as the Messiah.

However, the most compelling evidence for the **messianic identification** of the son of man is furnished by Christ himself. In **Mark 14:61–62** he identified himself as that "*Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.*" There is no other passage in the Old Testament to which Christ could have been referring. Furthermore, when Christ made the claim, the high priest said, "*You have heard the blasphemy*" (**Mark 14:64**), demonstrating that Jesus was understood to ascribe deity to himself. Young asserts, "The employment of this title by Jesus Christ is one of the strongest evidences that He attributed Deity to Himself."

"*Son of man*" is especially common in the eschatological passages of the New Testament (cf. **Matt 16:27–28; 19:28; 24:30; 25:31**; and elsewhere), and the phrase "*coming in clouds*" is understood in **Matt 24:30** as a reference to the return of Christ. Finally, other passages portray Christ with the same kind of glory, power, and authority as is set forth in **Dan 7** (e.g., **Isa 2:2–4; 9:6–7; 11:1–10; Ezek 34:23–24; Matt 28:18; Phil 2:9–11; Rev 19:1ff.; 20:4–6**).

Besides being a divine title, "*son of man*" sets forth the **humanity** of the Lord. Christ would be God, but he would also partake of human nature. Also, whereas all the features of absolute rule are ascribed to the son of man, the authority bestowed upon Christ here does not refer to his inherent sovereignty or deity. Rather, a new phase of his work is described.

> 2. (:**14**) Son of Man Delegated Millennial Dominion Leading to Eternal Kingdom
>
> > "*And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.*"

Paul Lederach: The sovereignty given this figure is

- **universal**: *all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him*;
- **eternal**: *shall not pass away*; and
- **all powerful**: *shall never be destroyed* (**7:14**).

Understandably, later Jewish and Christian interpreters of Daniel recognized **messianic qualities** in this figure coming with the clouds of heaven.

III. (:15-27) INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAMS OF DANIEL

A. (:15) Alarming Nature of the Visions

"*As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me,*

and the visions in my mind kept alarming me."

B. (:16-18) Accurate Summary Interpretation = the Big Idea Statement

1. (:**16**) Inquiry into Meaning of God's Revelation

"*I approached one of those who were standing by*
and began asking him the exact meaning of all this.
So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things:"

2. (:**17**) Interpretation of the Four Beasts

"*These great beasts, which are four in number,*
are four kings who will arise from the earth."

3. (:**18**) Inheritance for All Eternity

"*But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom*
and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come."

Stephen Miller: The eternality of this kingdom is expressed so emphatically that some argue the kingdom cannot be millennial. What it means, however, is that the kingdom **cannot be confined to the millennium**. As R. L. Saucy has written, especially in the Old Testament "the messianic kingdom is merged with the final eschatological picture of the new heaven and earth."

C. (:19-22) Analysis of the End Times

John Whitcomb: Daniel wanted more details.

1. (:**19**) Meaning of the Fourth Beast

"*Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet,*"

2. (:**20**) Meaning of the Ten Horns and Other Little Horn that Became Large

"*and the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts, and which was larger in appearance than its associates.*"

3. (:**21-22**) Millennial Kingdom Established after Victory and Judgment

"*I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.*"

Stephen Miller: Now a detail of utmost seriousness for the people of God is disclosed—the horn "*was waging war against the saints and defeating them.*" The fact that the little

horn would successfully persecute believers had not been expressed previously (cf. **Rev 13:7**), and Daniel certainly would have been concerned about this aspect of the vision.

John Whitcomb: Many believers will die during the Tribulation Period at the hand of the Antichrist; but some will survive and enter alive into the kingdom.

D. (:23-27) Analysis of the End Times Repeated and Expanded

1. (:**23**) Meaning of the Fourth Beast

> "*Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms, and it will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it.*'"

2. (:**24-25**) Meaning of the Ten Horns and the Other Horn

> "*As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 25 And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.*"

Tremper Longman III: The **image of a horn** is well known from other biblical references. Pride and honor, whether godly (**1 Sam. 2:1; Ps. 89:17[18], 24[25]; 112:9**) or ungodly (**Ps. 75:5**), is often described by the image of a lifted-up horn, stemming from the idea of a powerful animal lifting its head high. In our present passage, the connotation is that of uncalled-for pride. It is a **rebellious refusal to submit to God**.

Stephen Miller: Other Scripture passages also indicate that these three and one-half times are, in fact, **three and one-half years**.

(1) The seven times in **4:16** are generally interpreted as seven years.
(2) The Hebrew equivalent of this phrase occurs in **12:7** and is taken to approximate the 1,290 days of **12:11** and 1,335 days of **12:12**, both of which are just over three and one-half years.
(3) **Revelation 13:5** says that the beast (who represents the same individual described in this chapter) will have power for forty-two months, which is equal to three and one-half years.
(4) **Revelation 11:2** relates that Jerusalem will be trampled for forty-two months, which is the time of the persecution of the Antichrist.
(5) The same phrase is found in **Rev 12:14**; and the duration of this period is explained in **12:6** to be 1,260 days, which again is three and one-half years.
(6) The period of three and one-half years is referred to in **Dan 9:27**, where a covenant is broken in the middle of the seventieth "*seven*" (or week).

Most scholars understand the "*sevens*" spoken of in **chap. 9** to be sevens of years. Thus one "*seven*" is seven years. Religious activities are stopped at the midpoint of the final "*seven*" (seven years), which would make the time of trial three and one-half years (see **chap. 9** for discussion).

Thus the persecution of the saints will continue for three and a half years, which is exactly half of Antichrist's seven-year career. Commonly, this latter part of Antichrist's rule is called the "*great tribulation*" (cf. **Rev 7:14**). During this period, the judgments described in **Rev 14–19** will come upon the earth.

3. (:**26-27**) Millennial Kingdom Established after Victory and Judgment

> "*But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.*"

John Whitcomb: God has the final word of judgment. Phase 1 of the kingdom is 1,000 years and then Phase 2 goes on forever.

Iain Duguid: The point of this vision is that the time when the beasts will oppress the saints is limited by God. Beyond it lies the scene of the heavenly court, where the beasts will finally be tamed and destroyed. Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness will be handed over to the saints, to the people of the Most High. And his kingdom will never end. . .

To "*come on the clouds*" is a clear symbol of **divine authority**. In the Old Testament God alone rides on the cloud chariot (see **Ps. 68:4; Isa. 19:1**). What is more, when this son of man comes into the presence of the Ancient of Days, he is given authority, glory, and sovereign power. These attributes are not simply the authority and sovereignty that God gives to human kings such as Nebuchadnezzar (see **Dan. 5:18**), for this son of man also receives the worship of all peoples, nations, and languages (see **Dan. 7:14**). Thus, he cannot merely be an angel or personified representative of Israel. This son of man is given an everlasting and indestructible dominion, a sovereignty that belongs to God himself. So what are we to make of this vision of a God-man—one who shares our **humanity**, yet at the same time endows it with the fullness of **undiminished deity**?

There will soon come a time when this present world would have run its course, to be replaced by a better one. The day is indeed hastening on when the sands of time will run out and the beasts will face their judgment, but for the saints, glory will dwell forever in Immanuel's land!

(:28) EPILOGUE – END OF THE VISION

> "*At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself.*"

Paul Lederach: In the postscript, Daniel includes four items:

1. Daniel marks the end of the vision.
2. He describes his inner spirit as terrified, disturbed, perplexed.

3. He notes his physical condition—the vision has left him weak and pale.
4. He mentions his thoughts. What he has seen and heard keeps turning over in his mind again and again. He examines each detail so that nothing will be lost while he hopes that he might come to a fuller understanding of the vision.

* * * * * * * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Which interpretation of the four beasts makes the most sense to you:
- The fourth beast = Greece
- The fourth beast = Rome
- All four beasts not specifically identified but representative of successive world empires?

2) How would you compare the nature of existing evil world empires with the four beasts pictured here?

3) What is your main area of encouragement from this prophetic passage?

4) How do you view your ultimate participation in the end time victory of the Son of Man and the administration of His Millennial Kingdom?

* * * * * * * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Andrew Hill: **Visionary literature** announces an end to the way things are and opens up alternative possibilities to the audience as a result of God's impending intervention in human affairs. Three types of messages are usually associated with the visionary literature of the Bible:
(1) a message of encouragement to the oppressed;
(2) a warning to the oppressor; and
(3) a call to faith for those wavering between God's truth and human "wisdom."

Visionary literature portrays settings, characters, and events in ways different from ordinary reality. While the visions depict literal events, the symbolic descriptions do not necessarily represent the events literally. Leland Ryken (*How To Read the Bible as Literature* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984], 165–74) offers helpful guidelines for reading and understanding visionary literature:

- Be ready for the reversal of the ordinary.
- Be prepared to use your imagination to picture a world that transcends earthly reality.

- Be prepared for a series of diverse, self-contained units that tend to be kaleidoscopic in nature (instead of looking for a smooth flow of narrative).
- Seek to identify the historical event or theological reality in salvation history represented by the symbolism in the passage; to do so, observe the obvious, grasp the total scene, and do not press every detail of the vision for hidden meaning.
- Read widely in visionary literature (both biblical visionary literature and extrabiblical fantasy literature).
- Recognize the element of mystery and the supernatural quality of the Bible (and be willing humbly to admit that an exact understanding of a given vision may be beyond us).

Finally, visionary literature in the Bible has given rise to four major interpretive approaches to the understanding of the time-orientation of the divine revelation.

- The **preterist** approach views all the events described in the visions as past. By contrast,
- the **futurist** sees the events portrayed in the visions as yet come.
- The **historicist** appeals to the visions to trace the ideological or theological development of an age or an era (e.g., the history of Israel or the church age).
- The **idealist** understands the vision as a symbolic representation of the timeless conflict between good and evil.

Iain Duguid: Biblical apocalyptic is a revelation of the ending of this present age, which is an age characterized by conflict, and its replacement by the final age of peace. It shows us ahead of time the end of the kingdoms of this world and their replacement by the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. This revelation is unfolded in complex and mysterious imagery, and has the purpose of comforting and exhorting the faithful.

Apocalyptic literature thus proclaims a theology of hope to those whom the world has marginalized: it reminds us that God is presently on the throne and that he will ultimately triumph. In the meantime, whatever the present cost may be in terms of suffering, obedience to God is the only way. Though the propagandists for the present world order proclaim that our resistance is futile, the apocalyptic writer refuses to be assimilated to this world's way of thinking. He has seen heaven opened and he knows how the story ends. As a result, to paraphrase the words of Winston Churchill's great speech, he will fight them on the beaches; he will fight them in the streets; he will fight them in the hedgerows, on the land and on the sea. He expects nothing other than blood, sweat, and tears, but he will never surrender. Rather, he looks forward with unshakable hope to his final vindication, when the day at last comes for God to act decisively to bring in his new and final age of salvation. . .

The identification of the beasts as four past empires is the exact opposite of the message of apocalyptic literature. For apocalyptic, nothing less than the beginning of the new age can change this world. Until the coming of this new age, the darkness will not lift significantly. It is therefore better to take the number of the beasts as representing a **symbol of completeness** rather than a particular number of world empires. On such a

view, the message of **Daniel 7** is that life in this present age will always be this way until the end of this age. It is striking that the superpowers of our own age still customarily represent themselves by predatory animals, such as the Russian bear, the Chinese dragon, and the American eagle. The beasts of the present world order may change their shape as the centuries pass, but their violence and lust for power continues. Nebuchadnezzar turns into a Darius, who becomes an Alexander the Great and then an Antiochus Epiphanes, the Seleucid king who brutally oppressed the Jews in the mid-second century B.C. These fierce rulers are in turn followed by a Nero and a Domitian. Their fires of persecution continued to be stoked centuries later by the Inquisition. In the last century, we have seen further manifestations of the beast in the persons of Hitler, Stalin, and Kim Il Jung. The frightening beasts of this age were present at the gas chambers of Belsen, and on the killing fields of Cambodia and Rwanda, and they are still tormenting the saints in Sudan and China, and in other parts of our modern world.

This continual presence of the beasts in our world ought not to surprise us because every human manifestation of evil is simply a reflection of the work of the Great Dragon, Satan himself. In **Revelation 13**, we see a beast rising from the sea representing the persecuting power of the **antichrist**, a beast that combines aspects of each of Daniel's creatures into one, a lion-bear-leopard with ten horns. Whatever our location in space and time, frightening monsters array themselves against the Lord and his anointed. . .

The focus of **Daniel 7** is rather on the coming day of **divine judgment**, when these monsters will finally receive justice and God will win the final victory. This is one of the ways in which the viewpoint of the Scriptures and the viewpoint of ancient mythology diverge. The Bible can and does use mythological imagery in its apocalyptic passages, yet these mythological elements are now incorporated into a fundamentally historical view of the world. In ancient mythology there is no end to the conflict between the two equally ultimate realities, chaos and order. The struggle must continue forever. However, the Bible repeatedly declares that God alone is ultimate and that in the end **his order will prevail**.

Peter Wallace: If all you see in **Daniel 7** is a symbolic picture of "kingdoms" or "kings" then you will miss the central point of the chapter! Because the problem is that humanity is becoming **bestial**. Where are the humans in this chapter? Where is true humanity to be found?! God created man in his own image! But man has rejected God and has chosen to live like beasts. Some would say that Daniel (and apocalyptic literature in general) has a very pessimistic view of history. In one sense this is true! Daniel certainly does not believe in the modern notion of "progress." He does not think that things are getting better and better – always improving!

- The movement in **Daniel 2** was from gold to clay.
- The movement in **Daniel 7** is ever more bestial – ever more terrifying.

The only way out is for God to do something!

JOELLEPERRY: **The Kingdom of the Son of Man and the Ancient of Days**

1. Daniel dreams of four beasts – v. 1-8

a. In the dream, the four winds of heaven stirred up the Great Sea
b. Four great beasts came up form the seas, each different from the other
c. The first beast was like lion with wings of an eagle
   - The wings were plucked off
   - The beast was lifted up from the earth
   - The beast stood like a man
   - A man's heart was given to it
d. The second beast was like a bear
   - The bear was raised up on one side
   - There were three ribs in its mouth
   - It was told to the beast "*arise, devour much flesh*"
e. The third beast was like a leopard with four wings of a bird on its back
   - The beast had four heads
   - The beast was given dominion
f. The fourth beast
   - The fourth beast was dreadful, terrible, and exceedingly strong
   - It had huge iron teeth
   - It was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet
   - It was completely unique from the previous beasts
g. The little horn
   - The fourth beast had ten horns
   - Another little horn came up and plucked out three of the ten horns
   - The horn had eyes like a man and a mouth speaking pompous words

2. Daniel dreams of the Ancient of Days, the destruction of the little horn, and the Son of Man – v. 9-14

a. The Ancient of Days
   - thrones were put in place
   - The Ancient of Days was seated
   - Thousands of thousands ministered to Him and stood before Him
   - The court was seated
   - The books were opened
b. The little horn is slain and given to the burning flame
c. Dominion is taken away from the rest of the beasts
d. The lives of the rest of the beasts is prolonged for a season and a time
e. The Son of Man approaches the Ancient of Days
   - The Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven
   - The Son of Man is brought near to the Ancient of Days
   - The Son of Man is given an everlasting dominion, glory, and kingdom
   - All peoples, nations, and languages to serve the Son of Man

3. An angel gives interpretation of Daniel's dreams – v. 15-27

a. The four beasts are four kings that will arise out of the earth

b. The saints of Most High will receive the kingdom forever
c. Daniel asks about the fourth beast, the ten horns, and the one horn
- Daniel continued to watch
- The horn made war against the saints and prevailed
- The horn was stopped when the Ancient of Days judged in favor of the saints – this enacted the saints' possession of the kingdom

d. The angel answered Daniel about the fourth kingdom, the ten horns, and the little horn
- The fourth beast would be a fourth kingdom, unique from all other kingdoms
- The fourth beast would devour the whole earth, trample it, and break it in pieces
- The ten horns are ten kings that rise up from the fourth kingdom
- Another king rises after them
    - He subdues three kings
    - He speaks pompous words against the Most High
    - He persecutes the saints of the Most High
    - He tries to change times and law
    - The saints are given into his hand for three and a half years

e. After this the angel tells Daniel of the decrees in the court room of heaven
- The dominion would be taken away from the little horn – he will be utterly destroyed
- An everlasting kingdom will be given to the saints of the Most High
- The dominion and kingdom of the Most High is everlasting
- All shall serve and obey Him

4. After these things Daniel kept the matter in his heart but was greatly troubled – v. 28

https://ofhisglory.com/2019/05/17/daniel-chapter-summaries-and-outlines/

Stephen Miller: Virtually everyone agrees that the vision of **chap. 7** parallels the dream image of **chap. 2** and that both passages should be interpreted in the same manner. What was the purpose of repeating the prophecy of the four kingdoms?

- First, the two accounts complement each other in that they each provide details not found in the other.
- Second, there may be truth to the idea that the image with its glittering metals portrays the world's kingdoms from humanity's viewpoint—impressive and great, whereas the beasts depict these earthly kingdoms from God's perspective—vicious and destructive.
- Third, the message probably was repeated to emphasize its **certainty**. In **Gen 41** Pharaoh had two dreams that taught the same truth—a famine was coming upon the land. Joseph told Pharaoh, "*The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon*" (**Gen 41:32**). Thus the revelation of the four kingdoms in Daniel may have been presented in two forms in order to underscore the certainty of this amazing prophecy.

Paul Lederach: Though other identifications are possible historically and symbolically, this king seems best identified as **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**.

[Editor: This would be an example of near term foreshadowing of the ultimate reality = AntiChrist.]

The mouth speaking arrogantly (**7:8, 11, 20**) is guilty of three crimes:
1. *He shall speak words against the Most High* (**7:25**). That is, he blasphemes the God of Israel (cf. notes on **8:11**).
2. *He… shall wear out the holy ones of the Most High*. Antiochus persecuted the saints of the Most High. He plundered Jerusalem, looted the temple, took captives, placed in Jerusalem a citadel for his troops, and drove the faithful into hiding (1 Macc. 1:20-40).
3. *He … shall attempt to change the sacred seasons and the law*. Antiochus also interfered with Jewish religious practices, holy days, and offerings. Changing times reflects the Jewish thought that the unfolding of human history is in the hands of God, not humans (**Dan. 2:21**). By forcing his way to the throne and subjugating other nations, including Israel, Antiochus was at cross-purposes with God. Although there is no supporting evidence, Antiochus might have tried to impose a change from a 364-day solar calendar to a 360-day lunar calendar, creating havoc in setting dates for regular religious celebrations. Antiochus certainly did attack such rituals: "He directed them to follow customs strange to the land, to forbid burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, to profane sabbaths and festivals … so that they would forget the law and change all the ordinances" (1 Macc. 2:44-49).

The books of Maccabees describe how Antiochus attempted to stamp out the Mosaic Law. Unfortunately, in the view of the faithful, many Jews were ready and willing to adopt the Greek way of life. Many were ready to surrender Jewish religious practices for those promoted by Antiochus. "They built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom, and removed the marks of circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant. They joined with the Gentiles and sold themselves to do evil" (1 Macc. 1:14-15). "But many in Israel stood firm and … chose to die rather than to … profane the holy covenant; and they did die" (1 Macc. 1:62-63).

The climax of Antiochus's evil was the "desolating sacrilege" (1 Macc. 1:54). [Abomination That Desolates, p. 276.] This is referred to four times in Daniel (**8:13; 9:27; 11:31**; and **12:11**; cf. **Mark 13:14; Matt. 24:15**). Antiochus called himself "Epiphanes," which means "god manifest." He thought his facial features resembled those of the Olympian Zeus, and increasingly depicted himself with the traditional profile of Zeus on his coins and with a crown of rays, like Helios, the sun god. On the altar of the Jerusalem temple he erected an altar to Zeus, perhaps with meteorites to be worshiped (Goldstein, 1976:145-152). This emptied the temple of true worshipers, and God himself certainly departed, according to Israelite understanding (as in **Ezek. 11:22-23)**.

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **The Coming of the Son of Man**
Introduction: We come now here to the second part of the book of Daniel, which begins with chapter 7. Remember the vision in chapter 2? We come really to a kind of a parallel chapter here in Daniel chapter seven. Really what this is about is the kingdom of Christ. Christ's kingdom is the kingdom that will be eternal. One day God's kingdom will rule the world. And the kingdoms of men, the kingdoms of this earth, will come to nothing.

This chapter according to Dr. John Walvoord provides the most comprehensive and detailed prophecy of the end time events to be found anywhere in the Old Testament. And I am told that of the scribes who copied the Old Testament, the seventh chapter of Daniel was considered the greatest chapter in all of the scriptures. Cf. Is. 46:9

Big Idea: **Elements of the Kingdom of Christ**

I. The Comfort of the Kingdom of Christ

A. The Theme of the Vision

At this time, the people were questioning the word of God. In fact, they were wondering if God had failed to keep his word. Remember, God made two covenants with the people of Israel – Abrahamic and Davidic. Has God cast off His people? Has He given up on these promises?

This prophecy that Daniel gives here in chapter seven is God's way of assuring the people that he had not given up on his people or he had not given up on his promises. You see, there had to be 70 years of captivity. God was punishing the people. There had to be a time of restoration and a time of rebuilding. But God was going to keep his promises. In fact, God was showing these people through this vision that not only was he going to keep those promises, but he had a tremendously exciting future for Israel.

Notice the phrase here in verse 13, *one like the son of man*. Did you know that was the favorite title that Jesus referred to in the gospels. Jesus constantly referred to himself as the son of man, Matthew chapter 24. So this is the major thrust of the whole chapter. It is the kingdom of Christ. It is Christ coming in glory and in power, setting up his kingdom on earth.

B. The Time of the Vision

Belshazzar is in the first year of his reign. (Daniel's visions in this second part of the book are all dated according to the reign of the king.) This was after the death of Nebuchadnezzar. It is at the close of their own captivity.

II. The Chronology of the Kingdom of Christ – 7:2-8

It will be at the last, at the end of the Gentile kingdoms. It'll be right when they are coming to an end. God and his wisdom has allowed Gentile kingdoms to rule the world for a time. God set aside his people, Israel. They were meant to be a light, but they disobeyed God. God set aside Israel, and he allowed the Gentiles to trample down on Israel, to bring them into captivity. He is allowing the Gentile nations to have their time

on the stage of world history, but that time is going to draw to an end, and right at the end of that time is when Jesus Christ will come back and set up his kingdom, and he will sit upon the throne of David.

A. The Rage of the Seas

Daniel stands on the edge of this Great Sea. This is where civilization was born. The winds come in all four directions and the sea is turned up. What does the troubled sea stand for? It stands for humanity. It stands for the kingdoms of this earth. It stands for humanity and turmoil, the raging of the heathen. Only the sovereign wind of God's providence controls nations. That's why man cannot chart or predict world history.

B. Four Great Beasts

1) Lion – Babylonian Empire

The *eagles wings* here speaks of the swiftness with which Nebuchadnezzar would conquer the world. *Its wings were plucked.* This is a reference to the humiliation of Nebuchadnezzar. It was lifted up from the earth and made to stand upon the feet as a man and a man's heart was given to it. Here's the second part of it. Not only did God curse him with insanity, but after seven years, God restored his sanity.

2) Bear – Medo-Persian Empire

One side of the bear was larger than the other. So it was kind of oddly shaped. The Medo-Persian Empire was really a coming together of two kingdoms. And out of those two, there was one that was greater. There was one that was stronger, more powerful. And that was the Persian Empire. Cf. 8:3 – ram with two horns = the kings of Media and Persia. The three ribs in its mouth represent the three conquered kingdoms: the Lydian kingdom, the Babylonian kingdom, and the Egyptian kingdom.

3) Leopard – Grecian Empire

Alexander the Great invaded Asia Minor in 334 BC. And did you know that in eight years, this was by the time he was 32 years old, In eight years, he conquered the then known world. In fact, he conquered that and then he expanded it more. And as legend tells us, he sat on his horse and he wept because he had no more worlds to conquer. He conquered more than 11,000 miles of territory in a very short time.

four heads -- his kingdom was divided into four kings. Antiper and later Cassander gained control of Greece and Macedonia. Lysimachus ruled Thrace, that's a large part of Asia Minor. Seleucus governed Syria, Babylon, much of the Middle East. Ptolemy controlled Egypt and Palestine. And so here is this kingdom divided up into four.

The key to victory over the powerful Medo-Persian army is in verse number six, the last phrase -- *and dominion was given to it*. You know why Alexander the Great won that battle? Because God determined that he was going to win that battle. That's why. It wasn't the genius of Alexander the Great. It was the authority of God. He was given authority to rule. No matter how brilliant we may appear, it is ultimately God who is in control.

4) Roman Empire (not compared to any beast)

Because this is unlike anything he's ever seen. I mean, he hasn't really seen anything like this. He just calls it a terrible, a dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly. It had great iron teeth. The Romans were noted for their cruelty. They crushed, they smashed anything and anyone that was in their way. I think it's very much like the beast in Revelation chapter 13, which refers to the Roman, the revived Roman Empire.

It could be that the 10 horns here represent 10 rulers that are over the whole EU. In fact, I was reading that there's a council, a ruling council of the EU called the Council of the European Union. It's often called the Council of Ministers or just the Council. It's also called the Consilium in Latin. And it is a powerful legislative body. In fact, it is the most powerful legislative body. And also, when they established the EU, what's very interesting to me is they established three main areas called the three pillars of EU. And on this council, there are three men that are over these three so-called pillars. Now, friend, I can easily visualize in my mind a man coming to that council that basically uproots those three and seizes control and seizes power himself and becomes the head of this whole thing. And basically what I'm saying is the stage is set for something like that to happen.

C. Qualities of the Antichrist

Not only will the kingdom of Christ come after the final kingdom of nations and then the final form of the final kingdom. But then the coming of the kingdom of Christ will follow a final ruler. And that's the whole emphasis of verse eight. There's coming a ruler that will rule over the revived Roman Empire. And he is called the little horn here in verse number eight. This is the Antichrist.

He will be a political genius.
He will emerge from obscurity and gain great power. It will be by diplomatic chicanery and intrigue that he will win his early successes. And once he gains the ascendancy, none will dare to challenge his authority. Kings will be his pawns and princes his playthings.
He will be considered a vile person.
He won't be completely totally accepted at first.

1) His Intimidation – Political Genius
2) His Intelligence – this horn has eyes = intellectual genius
3) Oratorical Genius -- Inspires people with his speech
   He has a mouth that speaks great things
4) Economic Genius
5) Military Genius
6) Governmental Genius – he will unify countries and the world; globalist
   He will start out by unifying Europe
7) Religious Genius – at some point he will demand to be worshipped;
   He will be a man; the man of sin; Satan's Superman

D. Chronology Outlined

1. The kingdom of Christ follows the kingdom of nations
2. The kingdom of Christ follows the final form of the kingdoms of nations
3. The kingdom of Christ follows the final ruler of that kingdom = Antichrist
4. The kingdom of Christ follows the final persecution
   Rev. 13:4ff; Zech13:8-9; Dan. 7:25

III. The Commencement of the Kingdom of Christ

A. The Preparation of the Throne – 7:9-10

"*cast down*" -- If it was used in the typical Qal stem, it would be just to place. But here it's being used in the Piel intensive stem, which means *to throw down*. That's why I think that the KJV rendering of this is a little bit more accurate. Because this is literally what's happening. There are **thrones being thrown down**. The idea here is to prepare a throne by casting down cushions or pillows so that the king can be seated on his throne. The saints in heaven are ready to see judgment come. When the time comes for God to judge the Antichrist, The Bible says that there will be thrones cast down. I think it'll be the saints in heaven and we'll take our throne, which I think, you know, according to this imagery here, it's going to be somewhat like a cushion. I'm going to ask for a real big one. And they're going to throw it down. They're going to throw it down. They're going to throw what are they doing? They are preparing a throne. What kind of throne? A throne of judgment. In fact, you read for the Old Testament, whenever the Lord or God is pictured as judging, he is seated on the throne, a position of authority and posture. And so in the imagery here of Daniel, chapter seven, the saints in heaven, I think, are casting down their thrones to so that the almighty God will be seated on that throne of judgment.

B. The Punishment – 7:10

Rev. 5:11 -- there'll be a time of judgment when the scrolls, the books will be opened. The Antichrist will be destroyed and his kingdom will come to nothing.

IV. The Coronation of the Kingdom of Christ – 7:13

Son of Man here does not represent angels; is not the personification of the people of God, the Jewish nation – because all the world is worshipping **Christ** here.
Reasons this must refer to Christ:

- He comes with the clouds – **7:13; 1 Thess 4:17; Acts 1:11**
- Traditional Jewish interpretation = the Messiah – **John 12:34**
- Son of man used interchangeably with Christ
- Favorite title of Jesus for Himself as Deity

References to coronation of Jesus:
Gen. 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:16; Psalm 45, 72, 110; Is. 9; Zech 9; Rev. 11

V. Characteristics of the Kingdom of Christ

A. Authority / Dominion

This is not a democracy. He is the absolute ruler. There'll be no voting, no election, no approval rating, none of that stuff. It's not a democracy. Jesus will be the king. He

will be the one in charge. He will give us positions of authority. **Matt. 19:28; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 20:4**

B. Adoration / Honor – Ps. 2; 1 Tim. 6:15-16

C. **Aspect of the Kingdom** = Literal, earthly kingdom
There are some people out there that talk about the kingdom of Christ and they say, well, it's only a spiritual entity. It only dwells in the hearts of men.

D. Area / Scope of the Kingdom

1. will include all peoples all nations all language
2. all of creation, which is now in rebellion to man, all of the animal kingdom, which is in rebellion to man, will be brought under submission, under the authority of Jesus Christ. And everything that was lost in Eden will be restored.

E. Age / Duration = eternal

Cf. details from **Rev. 20** -- In chapter 20, it speaks about the millennial kingdom and it gives us really just a summary and it merely highlights some of the important aspects of that kingdom of Christ.

I believe Jesus sits on the throne of David in Jerusalem and he will carve a valley from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea and a new river will flow through that location and will turn the desert into a blossoming place. It'll be a time when the mind of Christ will be reflected in every single part of the kingdom, economically, morally, socially, in every way.

<u>3 Views</u> of the Millennial Kingdom – pre / a / post
If you hold to an amillennial view, if you believe that the kingdom is now, you must believe that Satan is what he's bound, that he's chained. OK. Now. I gotta tell you, I look out and I don't think he's chained.

TEXT: Daniel 8:1-27

TITLE: VISION OF THE RAM, MALE GOAT AND LITTLE HORN

BIG IDEA:
EVIL WORLD EMPIRES MAGNIFY THEIR POWER AND INFLUENCE BUT ULTIMATELY WILL ALL BE BROKEN BY THE SOVEREIGN POWER OF GOD

INTRODUCTION:

Stephen Miller: In the previous chapter God had given a preview of world history with emphasis on the end times, particularly the evil activities of the **Antichrist**. God's people also needed to be warned of another crisis that would come in less than four hundred years after Daniel's lifetime—the persecutions of a madman named **Antiochus IV Epiphanes** (175–163 B.C.). It would be one of the most horrible periods in history for believers, a time when the very existence of the true religion and its adherents was threatened. God knew that for those brief—only a few years—but extremely dark days his people would need a supernatural revelation to encourage them as they faced their "great tribulation."

Andrew Hill: The **Aramaic section** of Daniel opened and closed with a preview of world history, a series of four earthly kingdoms replaced by a fifth heavenly kingdom (**2:4–49** and **7:1–28**). Daniel's second vision (**ch. 8**) not only marks the resumption of the **Hebrew portion** of the book, but it also signals a **narrowing of the focus** of God's revelation to his servant. In contrast to the earlier pattern of four distinct animals used to represent four realms or kingdoms, the vision of **ch. 8** features only two animal figures symbolizing but two earthly empires. The **setting** of the vision shifts as well, presumably from Babylon (**7:1**) to Susa (**8:2**). The date formula (**v.1**) sets the vision during the third year of King Belshazzar (ca. 551 or 550 BC), which means the events of **ch. 8** actually precede the events recorded in **ch. 5** of the book.

Tremper Longman III: The connection of **Daniel 8** with **chapter 7** is obvious. The first verse associates the two by introducing the second vision as occurring "*after the one that had already appeared to me*." It comes from approximately the same time period, Belshazzar's third year, two years after **chapter 7**. In addition, the actors in the prophetic visions of both chapters are animals, and we soon see that these animals represent kingdoms, that is, political entities. In both cases, there is a concluding focus on a horn that emanates from these animals. Finally, both chapters concern hostility between the animal kingdoms and the divine realm.

But closer examination forces us to recognize differences between the chapters as well. Some appear relatively incidental to the meaning of the text. For instance, the prophecy in **chapter 7** is called a dream, whereas the prophecy in eight is termed a "vision." From the description of the two, the distinction is not so much in terms of content or form, but rather in terms of the way the prophecy is mediated to Daniel.

Another difference between the prophecies of the two chapters has to do with the nature of the animals and the transparency of the imagery. In **chapter 7**, we encountered hybrid animals of grotesque appearance, while in **chapter 8**, the animals seem normal (with the possible exception of the horns). In our description below, we will see the ease with which we can associate these animals and their horns with particular and well-known political entities. This fact explains why commentators over the years have registered little of the interpretive disagreement that we saw in **chapter 7**.

The similarities between these two chapters mean that the themes of the two are closely related. Indeed, we have already indicated that **chapters 7–12** focus on six important themes:

- the horror of human evil, particularly as it is concentrated in the state• the announcement of a specific time of deliverance
- repentance that leads to deliverance
- the revelation that a cosmic war stands behind human conflict
- judgment as certain for those who resist God and oppress his people
- the equally certain truth that God's people, downtrodden in the present, will experience new life in the fullest sense.

Iain Duguid: Like the vision in **Daniel 7**, this vision describes a series of kingdoms in the form of animals that exalt themselves, with one kingdom rising after another, aspiring to greatness and achieving it, but then being shattered. The ram seems invincible until the goat arises, but then he is swiftly destroyed. The first horn of the goat throws the ram to the ground and no one can rescue the ram from the horn's power, but at the height of his power, the large horn too is shattered. In other words, no matter how great and menacing an empire may appear to be, it is simply an actor in a play written by someone else. It plays out the role assigned to it by God on the revolving stage of world history, and then, when its lines are over, it slinks off ignominiously into the wings. The rise and fall of these real historical nations, predicted accurately centuries ahead of time by the Lord through his prophets, remind us clearly who is directing the course of history. **Earthly thrones and dominions come and go in a ceaseless round; only the kingdom of God is forever**.

The message of the vision was thus **good news** to generations of saints who suffer at the hands of earthly kingdoms, whether the Babylonians, or the subsequent Persians and Greeks, or present-day persecutors. These empires that to human eyes looked so powerful, that seemed to have no weaknesses or chinks in their armor, were actually merely sheep and goats whose destiny lay in the hands of the divine shepherd, the Lord himself. They weren't even the cosmically frightening monsters of **Daniel 7**, but only overgrown domestic animals. Like any good shepherd, the Lord is easily able to judge mere sheep and goats who step out of line and to put them back in their place (see **Ezek. 34**).

John Walvoord: It may be concluded that this difficult passage apparently goes beyond that which is historically fulfilled in Antiochus Epiphanes to foreshadow a future personage often identified as the world ruler of the end time. In many respects this ruler carries on a persecution of Israel and desecration of the temple similar to what was accomplished historically by Antiochus. This interpretation of the vision may be regarded as an illustration of double fulfillment of prophecy or, using Antiochus as a type, the interpretation may go on to reveal additional facts which go beyond the type in describing the ultimate king who will oppose Israel in the last days. He indeed will be "*broken without hand*" at the time of the second advent of Jesus Christ. . .

The emphasis of the eighth chapter of Daniel is on prophecy as it relates to Israel; and for this reason, the little horn is given prominence both in the vision and in the interpretation. The times of the Gentiles, although not entirely a period of persecution of Israel, often resulted in great trial to them. Of the four great world empires anticipated by Daniel, only the Persian empire was relatively kind to the Jew. As Christ Himself indicated in Luke 21:24, the times of the Gentiles is characterized by the treading down of Jerusalem, and the subjugation and persecution of the people of Israel.

I. (:1-14) VISION OF THE RAM, MALE GOAT AND LITTLE HORN

A. (:1-4) Vision of the Ram with Two Horns

1. (:**1**) Timing and Sequencing of the Vision

> "*In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king a vision appeared to me, Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously.*"

Stephen Miller: Since Belshazzar became coregent with his father, Nabonidus, in 553 B.C., the third year of his rule would have been approximately 550 B.C. About this time Cyrus established the Medo-Persian Empire, destined to bring an end to the period of Babylonian supremacy within a mere twelve years. Nabonidus, observing this union, became apprehensive about Cyrus's intentions and attempted to forge an alliance with Lydia and Egypt to protect himself against a possible Medo-Persian threat. The whole world was anxiously watching to see what Cyrus would do. God may have given the vision at this particular time to assure Daniel and his fellows that the Jews would survive as a people long after Cyrus (and Belshazzar) had passed from the scene. By now Daniel was an old man, about seventy, yet he still was faithfully serving the Lord.

Andrew Hill: The repetition of verbs of "*seeing*" (**vv.1, 3–5, 7**) "conveys something of the involvement of the seer's consciousness as he oriented himself first to the fact that he was receiving a vision, then to his geographical surroundings, and finally to the particular image presented to his gaze" (Baldwin, 155).

John Whitcomb: See in this chapter how this Neo-Babylonian Empire expanded and became prominent and then how it collapsed. Daniel is well aware of Ezekiel's prophecies (who had recently died).

2. (:**2**) Setting of the Vision

> "*And I looked in the vision, and it came about while I was looking, that I was in the citadel of Susa, which is in the province of Elam; and I looked in the vision, and I myself was beside the Ulai Canal.*"

Stephen Miller: Susa (Heb. *šušān*, called Susa by the Greeks) was located about 220 miles east of Babylon and 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf. At the time of Daniel's vision it was the capital of Elam and later became one of the Medo-Persian royal cities (cf. **Neh 1:1** and **2:1**; **Esth 1:2**). Susa was used as a winter residence by the Persian kings and was made the administrative capital of the empire by Darius I in 521 B.C. Darius also built a beautiful palace there.

John Walvoord: Most expositors, whether liberal or conservative, understand **Daniel 8** to teach that Daniel was actually in Babylon and in vision only was transported to Shushan. . . Ezekiel also was transported in vision, presumably (**Eze 8:3; 40:1 ff**.).

3. **(:3-4)** The Focal Point of the Vision = the Power of the Ram

a. (:**3**) Power Pictured by Two Distinct Horns

> "*Then I lifted my gaze and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last.*"

Stephen Miller: Rams normally have two horns, but these horns were unique. One horn came up later yet grew longer than the other. Scholars agree that the symbolism denotes the two divisions of the empire, Media and Persia, and signifies that one part of this empire would begin with less strength yet subsequently become more powerful than the other division. That such was the case is evident from Medo-Persian history. Before Cyrus came to power, Media already was a major force, while Persia was a small country holding less than fifty thousand square miles of territory.15 But Cyrus succeeded in gaining control of powerful Media to the north (ca. 550 B.C.) and then made Persia the more important of the two states. With these nations united, he established the vast Medo-Persian Empire.

b. (:**4a**) Power Demonstrated by Geographic Conquests

> "*I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beasts could stand before him, nor was there anyone to rescue from his power;*"

John Whitcomb: The ram (male sheep) speaks of empire under the direction of Cyrus who conquered nations in every direction as he expanded big time. Why are empires depicted as ravenous beasts? They are worse than sinless animals. They oppress other nations on a rampage under satanic direction.

Stephen Miller: The ram seemed **invincible** as it charged toward the west (lit., "*toward the sea*," a reference to the Mediterranean Sea, which was west of Palestine), the north, and the south. Medo-Persia made most of its conquests in these directions. To the west it subdued Babylonia, Syria, Asia Minor, and made raids upon Greece; to the north—Armenia, Scythia, and the Caspian Sea region; to the south—Egypt and Ethiopia.

John Goldingay: There is nothing inherently wrong with "*doing big things*"; but the expression is used in an unequivocally good sense only of God (**1 Sam 12:24; Ps 126:2, 3**). Of human beings it tends to suggest arrogance (**Jer 48:26; Joel 2:20; Zeph 2:10; Ps 35:26; Ps 55:12 [13]**), or at least achievement at someone else's expense (**Zeph 2:8; Lam 1:9**). Here it is achievement that presages calamity. The expression has the foreboding ambiguity of the mouth speaking big things in **7:8, 20**.

c. (:**4b**) Power Celebrated by the Magnification of the Ram
"*but he did as he pleased and magnified himself.*"

B. (:5-8) Vision of the Male Goat Attacking the Ram = Alexander the Great

1. (:**5**) Description of the Male Goat

a. Swiftness of Conquests
"*While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground;*"

John Whitcomb: Male goat of Alexander the Great now attacks the male sheep. He didn't last long but at the age of 22 he starts here. God will use him to crush a great Medo-Persian Empire that had become complacent and corrupt under the leadership of Darius III. He built a causeway out to Tyre and conquered it. Then he moved down into the Holy Land and shown the Jewish scriptures – particularly the book of Daniel. This third empire was eventually shattered into 4 parts after his death.

John Whitcomb: Alexander the Great had army of about 40,000 – **very powerful** and **able to move swiftly**. Able to destroy the Medo-Persian Empire.

b. Power of Conquests
"*and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes.*"

Stephen Miller: Gabriel again interpreted the vision for Daniel. In **v. 21** the goat is specifically identified as a symbol of the Greek Empire, and the "*prominent*" horn is stated to represent its first king, who, of course, was **Alexander the Great**. The rest of the symbolism is not explained in the text but is clear from history. Coming "*from the west*" points to the position of Greece, which was to the west of Medo-Persia (and Palestine). "*Crossing the whole earth*" means that Alexander conquered the world of his day, and the goat speeding across the globe "*without touching the ground*" portrays the swiftness of Alexander's conquests.

Alexander was one of the great military strategists of history. He was born in 356 B.C., the son of a great conqueror in his own right, Philip of Macedon. Philip had united Greece with Macedonia and was planning to attack Persia when he was murdered. Alexander, educated under the famed Aristotle, was only twenty in 336 B.C. when he succeeded his father as king. A year and a half later (334 B.C.), he launched his attack against the Persians. In that same year Alexander won the Battle of Granicus in Asia Minor, thereby bringing to an end the dominance of the Medo-Persian Empire. With his subsequent victories at Issus (333 B.C.) and Arbela (331 B.C.) the conquest of Medo-Persia was complete. Incredibly within only three years Alexander had conquered the entire Near East.

2. (:**6-7**) Destruction of the Ram by the Goat

a. (:**6**) Angry Attack

"*And he came up to the ram that had the two horns,*
which I had seen standing in front of the canal,
and rushed at him in his mighty wrath."

b. (:**7a**) Superior Strength

"*And I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him;*
and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns,
and the ram had no strength to withstand him."

c. (:**7b**) Crushing Conquest

"*So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him,*
and there was none to rescue the ram from his power."

Stephen Miller: The goat charging the ram in a fit of "*great rage*" (**v. 6**) aptly describes Alexander's assault on the Persian Empire. Hatred for the Persians had grown steadily since the time of Cyrus due to constant quarreling and fighting between Persia and Greece, and the Greeks were especially bitter over the invasions of Darius I (490 B.C.) and his son, Xerxes I (480 B.C.). Alexander determined to avenge these assaults on his homeland, and **v. 7** graphically portrays the utter defeat of the Persian armies at the hands of the Greek forces.

John Walvoord: The forces of Alexander first met and defeated the Persians at the Granicus River in Asia Minor in May 334 B.C., which was the beginning of the complete conquest of the entire Persian Empire. A year and a half later a battle occurred at Issus (November 333 B.C.) near the northeastern tip of the Mediterranean Sea. The power of Persian was finally broken at Gaugamela near Nineveh in October 331 B.C.

There is no discrepancy between history, which records a series of battles, and Daniel's representation that the Persian Empire fell with one blow. Daniel is obviously describing the result rather than the details. That the prophecy is accurate, insofar as it goes, most expositors concede. Here again, the correspondence of the prophecy to later history is so accurate that liberal critics attempt to make it history instead of prophecy.

3. (:**8a**) Magnification of the Male Goat

"*Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly.*"

4. (:**8b**) Division of the Goat's Empire into Four Realms

a. Surprising Sudden Destruction

"*But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken;*"

John Whitcomb: Alexander the Great died at age of 33.

b. Subdivisions of the Kingdom

"*and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.*"

Stephen Miller: When Alexander (the large horn) died, he left two sons, Alexander IV and Herakles, both of whom were murdered. After a period of infighting and struggle, the empire came to be partitioned among four Greek military leaders ("*four prominent horns*"), who are commonly designated as the Diadochi ("*successors*"). This division took place roughly according to the four directions (cf. **11:4**, and see the discussion at **7:6**). This fourfold division of the Greek Empire after Alexander "has been the almost constant interpretation of the four [kingdoms], with variations as to the names of the Diadochi." Archer observes that some of these areas later gained their independence but correctly notes that "the initial division of Alexander's empire was unquestionably fourfold."

C. (:9-12) Vision of the Little Horn = Antiochus IV Epiphanes

1. (:**9**) Dramatic Geographic Expansion

"*And out of one of them came forth a rather small horn*
which grew exceedingly great toward the south,
toward the east,
and toward the Beautiful Land."

Stephen Miller: Out of one of the four horns grew a little horn that "*started small*" but became very large and powerful. The meaning is that from one of the divisions of the Greek Empire would emerge a king of unusual significance. Scholars agree that this little horn represents the eighth ruler of the Seleucid Greek Empire, **Antiochus IV Epiphanes** (175–163 B.C.). Antiochus IV was particularly important because of his exploits against the inhabitants of Palestine and for that reason received special attention in the Book of Daniel (cf. **11:21–35**).

Starting "*small*" (Heb. *ṣā'îr*, "little with the idea of insignificant") indicates that Antiochus would have an insignificant beginning. Although his nephew, son of his older brother Seleucus IV, was the rightful heir to the throne, Antiochus gained this position through bribery and flattery. He made notable conquests in "*the south*" (Egypt), "*the east*" (Persia, Parthia, Armenia), and "*the Beautiful Land*" (Palestine). Palestine is called "*Beautiful*" (*ṣebî*, "place of beauty or honor"; cf. **11:16, 41; Jer**

3:19) not because of its scenery but because of its **spiritual significance**. It was a place of beauty and honor because Yahweh God had chosen it as the center of his operations on the earth and because his people lived there. Though Palestine was in the southern regions, it is singled out because the little horn's rule over the holy land would have enormous consequences for the Jewish people.

2. (:**10**) Degrading Persecution of God's People

"*And it grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down.*"

Stephen Miller: This king (the little horn) will become so arrogant that he is willing to assert himself against the saints of God and even against God himself.

"*Threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them*" signifies that Antiochus would **persecute the Jewish saints** in Palestine. "*Trampled upon them*" suggests severe persecution. Antiochus's persecution of the Jews may be considered to have begun in 170 B.C. with the assassination of the high priest Onias III and terminated in 163 B.C. at his death (or even a few months earlier when the temple was rededicated in December 164 B.C.). During this period he executed thousands of Jews who resisted his unfair regulations. In 169 B.C., after a humiliating experience in Egypt when Antiochus was turned back by the Roman commander Popilius Laenas, the Syrian king plundered the temple in Jerusalem (taking its treasures, including the furniture that was adorned with precious metals) and committed "*deeds of murder*" (cf. 1 Macc 1:20–24; 2 Macc 5:1ff.). In 2 Macc 5:11–14 these "deeds of murder" are said to have included the slaughter of eighty thousand men, women, boys, girls, even infants by Antiochus's soldiers during this attack upon Jerusalem. Many other ways in which Antiochus "*trampled*" upon the Jewish saints are recorded in 1 Maccabees (e.g., 1 Macc 1:29–32, 41–64). In December 167 B.C. Antiochus committed his crowning act of sacrilege against the Jewish religion by erecting an altar to Zeus in the temple precincts and offering swine on it (cf. 1 Macc 1:37, 39, 44–47, 54, 59; 2 Macc 6:2–5).

3. (:**11**) Defilement of Worship

a. Magnification of the Little Horn

"*It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host;*"

b. Cessation of Sacrifices

"*and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him,*"

c. Desecration of Sanctuary

"*and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down.*"

John Whitcomb: "*Prince of the Host*" = God of Israel; God of the world. Book of First Maccabees preserved by God to record the abominations of Antiochus Epiphanes. He caused the sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem to cease and put in place instead a pig. He wanted to wipe out every vestige of Judaism. God allowed this because of the great

transgression of the Jews. He wanted a unified empire that would not be opposed to his rule and his god and his religion.

Stephen Miller: Not only would the "*horn*" consider himself the Prince's equal; he would also set himself "*against*" the Prince (an alternate translation of the Heb.). He felt that he and his Greek gods were above Yahweh, and he blatantly attacked Yahweh and his worshipers. For example, Antiochus insisted that the Jews refrain from following the Jewish religious laws (diet, circumcision, Sabbaths, and feasts); he desecrated Yahweh's temple; he required allegiance to himself and the Greek gods rather than to Yahweh; and he showed disrespect to Yahweh by persecuting his followers (cf. 1 Macc 1:41–50). These were blatant offenses not only against the saints but against their God, "*the Prince of the host*."

4. (:**12**) Dominion over the Truth

"*And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper.*"

Andrew Hill: The opening phrase of **v.12**, "*because of rebellion*" ("*on account of transgression*," NASB), is obscure (cf. Miller, 226; Lucas, 206). The word "*rebellion*" or "*transgression*" (Heb. *pāšaʿ*) suggests that the horn's tyrannical rule over God's people is divine retribution for Israel's (unspecified) sin. If so, it helps explain the placement of Daniel's prayer of confession immediately after the vision of the ram and the goat (although the date formula places the event a dozen years or so after the vision; cf**. 9:1**).

Stephen Miller: these clauses may also mean that Antiochus would "*act as he pleases and prosper*" (cf. NASB). The latter understanding of the passage well describes Antiochus's actions. For a time he held absolute power over Palestine and was successful in his military and political endeavors.

D. (:13-14) Duration of Temple Defilement and Subjugation

1. (:**13**) Query – How Long?

"*Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, 'How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?'*"

Stephen Miller: The angel's question is, How long would temple worship cease and the persecution of the saints described in Daniel's vision continue? No services would be held in the temple because it would be defiled by Antiochus, and idols would be set up in the temple precincts. "*The rebellion that causes desolation*" likely alludes to the Zeus statue (or altar) set up by Antiochus in the temple and designated in **11:31** "*the abomination that causes desolation.*" The angel desired to know the **duration** of this period of desolation. Here it is demonstrated that angels are deeply interested in the affairs of God's people.

John Whitcomb: Angels are fascinated and want to look into God's agenda on the earth. What is going on and How long will this last?

2. (:**14**) Response – 2300 Days

"*And he said to me, 'For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored.*"

John Goldingay: The central feature in the act of deliverance would be not the destruction of an enemy but the **fate of a sanctuary**. That prospect was reflected in the way the holy one set a term to the offensive events: they would last for a period conceived in terms of how long daily sacrifices would be suspended. The climax of the deliverance would come with the vindication of the sanctuary.

Tremper Longman III: It is with the interpretation of this chronological statement that we encounter the most disagreement about the interpretation of the symbolism of the chapter. Literally, the phrase translates "*evening, morning—two thousand, three hundred*." Does this mean **2300 days**, reflecting the language of **Genesis 1** ("*there was evening, and there was morning—the [Xth] day*")? Or does it mean 1150 days, with the reference to evening and morning being to the daily sacrifices? In other words, were there 1150 morning sacrifices and 1150 evening sacrifices, totaling 2300 sacrifices but **1150 days**?

It is also possible to fit both numbers, approximately, into the time of its fulfillment in the middle of the second century B.C. After all, when does the period start, with the prohibition of sacrifice in late 167 or earlier with the removal of Onias III from the high priesthood in 171? And when does it end, with the reconsecration of the high priesthood in 164 or in 163 when Antiochus died? Or, contrary to both of these literalistic interpretations, is the number symbolic?

John Whitcomb: Time period here is 2300 days (6 years and 4 months) after the pattern of expression in **Genesis 1**. Sanctuary finally rescued from Syrian army by a family of dedicated Jews (the Maccabeans).

Andrew Hill: Goldingay, 210, summarizes the vision by commenting that the "army, sanctuary, and truth are all portrayed as victims of the goat's charging and butting."

II. (:15-26) INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION BY THE ANGEL GABRIEL

A. (:15-22) Interpretation of the Ram and the Male Goat

1. (:**15-17**) Angelic Exposition of the Vision

a. (:**15a**) Understanding of the Vision Sought by Daniel

"*And it came about when I, Daniel, had seen the vision, that I sought to understand it;*"

b. (:**15b-16**) Understanding of the Vision Channeled thru Gabriel

"*and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, 'Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision.'*"

John Whitcomb: This is probably the voice of God Himself. Gabriel is already thousands of years old. Angels don't age. Gabriel is going to make an amazing announcement of what will come next. Events will be a foreshadowing of what will take place at the end of the age under Antichrist. Repeated **Emphasis** is that these events culminate in the "*time of the end*." Antiochus was not at the end of the world. The Roman Empire still had to come, etc. We are talking here about eschatology and great complexity of events.

c. (:**17**) Ultimate Fulfillment of the Vision Relates to Eschatology

"*So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face; but he said to me, 'Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end.'*"

2. (:**18-22**) Accurate but Abbreviated Identification of the Details in the Vision

a. (:**18-19**) Emphasis on Future Fulfillment

"*Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand upright. 19 And he said, 'Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end.'*"

Andrew Hill: The "*time of wrath*" likely refers to the period of Hebrew history from the Babylonian exile onward, that era covered by the rise and fall of the four kingdoms described in the statue dream of **ch. 2** and the vision of animals arising out of the sea in **ch. 7** (cf. Lucas, 220). The qualifier "*later*" refers to the Seleucid persecution of the Hebrews by Antiochus IV Epiphanes as indicated in the interpretation of the vision of the shaggy goat in **vv.23–25**.

The second **temporal expression**, "*the appointed time of the end*" (Heb. *lemôʿēd qēṣ*) is parallel to the phrase "*the time of the end*" used earlier by the interpreting angel (**v.17**). The idea behind the phrase "*the end*" (Heb. *qēṣ*; GK 7891) is a **punctiliar moment in time**, the end of the kingdom of Anitiochus IV and hence his persecution of the Hebrews, and the reconsecration of the Jerusalem temple (**v.14**). The fact that this is "*the appointed time of the end*" emphasizes that "the 'time' has been set . . . by the Lord of history" (Miller, 233), underscoring **God's sovereignty** over the historical process. "The important point scored in this talk of the wrath of God is that God is still in charge, not human powers, despite signs to the contrary" (Seow, 128–29).

b. (:**20**) Ram = Medo-Persian Kingdom

"*The ram which you saw with the two horns*

represents the kings of Media and Persia."

John Whitcomb: This makes it crystal clear that the **fourth kingdom is Rome**. This makes it clear that Daniel is dealing with predictive prophecy despite the skepticism of liberal scholars.

c. **(:21a)** Goat = Kingdom of Greece
"*And the shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece,*"

d. **(:21b)** Large Horn = Alexander the Great
"*and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king.*"

e. (:**22**) Four Horns = Four Less Powerful Subdivided Kingdoms
"*And the broken horn and the four horns that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power.*"

B. (:23-26) Interpretation of the Little Horn = Focus of the Vision – Antiochus as a Type of Antichrist

Stephen Miller: **Verses 23–26** are the heart of the vision and the reason for the revelation to Daniel. God disclosed this historical summary to the prophet to prepare the Jewish people for the coming crisis—Antiochus's persecution. Biblical revelations of the future are given by the Lord to his people to exhort faithfulness, to encourage during difficult days, and to comfort in suffering.

Toward the end of Greek rule was when Antiochus would come to power. The "*rebels*" (*happōšĕʿîm*) are those who have rebelled against God's law. As explained in the discussion of **v. 12**, these rebels are best taken to be Jews who have forsaken their God. "*When rebels have become completely wicked*" may indicate the time when the sin of these rebels has reached the point where God deems punishment appropriate (cf. **Gen 15:16; Matt 23:32; 1 Thess 2:16**).

A "*stern*" (*ʾaz*, "mighty, strong, fierce") face means that the king who will arise will be harsh in manner and in his treatment of those who oppose him. Slotki interprets the word to signify "unyielding, merciless," citing **Deut 28:50.51** "*A master of intrigue*" (mēbîn ḥîdôt) is literally "one who understands riddles or difficult problems." In **1 Kgs 10:1** *ḥîdôt* is used of the perplexing questions that the Queen of Sheba put to Solomon. Here the phrase may signify that the king will be a master of **political intrigue** (NIV, NASB) or that he will be able to solve difficult problems within his kingdom. Political "intrigue" probably is the idea. Scholars agree that this wicked king, Antiochus IV, was indeed "a master of intrigue."

1. (:**23**) Description of the Final Wicked King
"*And in the latter period of their rule, When the transgressors have run their course, A king will arise Insolent and skilled in intrigue.*"

John Goldingay: Two key aspects of Daniel's portrait of Antiochus are summarized in **v. 23b** and expanded in **vv. 24** and **25:85** his **ruthless boldness** and his **artful cleverness**. These characteristics are not mere randomly observed aspects of a particular person's character. Nor does the seer imply that Antiochus only looks fierce and/or that he compensates for lack of real strength by trickery. Used for evil ends, Antiochus's two characteristics are both elements in the standard portrayal of a **tyrant**. They are not so much descriptions of Antiochus's distinctive personal character as elements in a stylized characterization of him as a **wicked king**.

2. (:**24-25a**) Details of His Power and Tactics

a. (:**24**) Details of His Power and Destruction

"*And his power will be mighty, but not by his own power,*
And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree
And prosper and perform his will;
He will destroy mighty men and the holy people."

John Whitcomb: He shall have satanic power. He is a very arrogant, proud, boastful monarch. He will suddenly collapse by supernatural judgment.

b. (:**25a**) Details of His Tactics and Arrogance

1) Characterized by Shrewdness and Deceit

"*And through his shrewdness*
He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence;"

2) Motivated by Magnifying Himself

"*And he will magnify himself in his heart,*"

3) Treacherous Attacks on the Unsuspecting

"*And he will destroy many while they are at ease.*"

4) Arrogant Opposition to Christ

"*He will even oppose the Prince of princes,*"

3. (:**25b**) Destruction by Divine Agency

"*But he will be broken without human agency.*"

Norman Porteous: The power and success of Antiochus are quickly indicated, his conquests and in particular his actions directed against '*the people of the saints*' (i.e. the Jews). There is an evident link here with **7:25**. The Hebrew of **v. 25** is difficult but may be made to yield the meaning that the king's mind is always busy hatching plots which he carries through to a great measure of success. He is full of **grandiose plans**—that is what this Jew felt about Antiochus's plans for unifying his kingdom in which he may well have been imitating the policy of Alexander though without his vision and genius—and in putting them into execution he catches men when off their guard.

Greg Thurston: Again, there is little question that this is referring to Antiochus Epiphanes- an extremely evil and wicked leader who was quite hostile toward the people of God. Let me give you some background.

- In 169 BC, Antiochus IV (who called himself Theos Epiphanes- lit., "God-Incarnate") travelled to Jerusalem where he replaced the high priest with a man of his own choosing. He then invaded Egypt, and while there a rumor of his death circulated among the Jews (much to their joy). Not surprisingly efforts were made to reinstate the genuine high priest whom Antiochus deposed.

- Yet Antiochus wasn't dead! When he received word Jerusalem was revolting against the high priest he installed, he accused the Jewish people of rebellion, savagely attacked and sacked Jerusalem, and executed tens of thousands of its inhabitants (it is said that 40,000 people were executed within the space of three days)! He then travelled back to Jerusalem where he entered the holy of holies in the temple. There he sacrificed a pig on the altar of burnt offering, defiled the temple precincts, took the sacred furniture, and re-established Menelaus as high priest.

- This understandably resulted in major rebellion on the part of the Jews to which Antiochus reacted with a religious persecution of unprecedented bitterness! More than 20,000 of his soldiers massacred the Jews assembled for worship on a Sabbath day. Sabbath-keeping and the practice of circumcision were forbidden under the pain of death. Unclean meat was mandatory fare, and the Sabbath and other feast days were profaned. Pagan sacrifices and prostitution were established in the Temple. And a statue of Zeus was placed in the temple to which human sacrifices were offered on the altar!

https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/83014178443.pdf

4. (:**26**) Disposition of the Vision

> "*And the vision of the evenings and mornings which has been told is true; But keep the vision secret, For it pertains to many days in the future.*"

Andrew Hill: The command to "*seal up*" the vision (**v.26b**) is due to the fact that "*it concerns the distant future*" (**v.26c**) and implies that the vision has been written down (cf. **7:1**). The verb "*to seal*" (Heb. *stm*; GK 6258) may simply mean to close up in the sense of preserving and keeping it safe until the time when it is needed (cf. Goldingay, 218). The term may also denote keeping the interpretation of the vision "*secret*" (so NASB), given its relevance to the distant rather than the immediate future (cf. Collins, Daniel, 341–42). The verb "*close up*" (Heb. *stm*) is coupled with the verb "*seal up*" (Heb. *ḥtm*; GK 3159) in **12:4, 9** in the sense that Daniel is instructed to "*close up and seal*" the scroll or book of his visions both for the purposes of safeguarding them for the future and keeping them secret until the time of the generation for whom they were intended. Lucas, 221, notes here that on at least one occasion Ezekiel's contemporaries dismissed what he said because his vision concerned "*the distant future*" (**Eze 12:27**).

Iain Duguid: The prophet is explicitly told to seal up the vision because it refers to a **distant time** (**Dan. 8:26**); it must be sealed, not so much in order to keep it secret but to keep it safe in the midst of turbulent times. Yet if the promised new world of **Daniel 7** may still be a long way away, in the interim God's people will need help to keep their faith fresh over the long haul. **How do you persist in faith and obedience** to God when you live under constant pressure and intense persecution, and it seems that there is no imminent end in sight? That is the issue that faces many of us from day to day, and it is the question with which **Daniel 8** deals.

(:27) EPILOGUE – REACTION OF DANIEL

A. Incapacitated

"*Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days.*"

B. Focused

"*Then I got up again and carried on the king's business;*"

John Goldingay: Awareness of where history is going puts you into a complicated position. It indeed gives you confidence where you might otherwise have been overcome by worry: you know that a supernatural hand has already broken all evil power and that the risks you have to live with can be lived with. But you may also be awed and troubled, by having been put in touch with heavenly realities, by the knowledge of what the future may bring to you and to other people. And at the same time you have to get on with the job of living—which for Daniel means working and serving in the context of the ongoing life of the "horns."

C. Perplexed

"*but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain it.*"

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) How can critical scholars dispute the obvious future **prophetic content** of this vision?

2) Why the emphasis on each of these kings (kingdoms) **magnifying** themselves?

3) What descriptions of this **little horn** could only apply to the future Antichrist and would not have found ultimate fulfillment in the historical events of Antiochus IV Epiphanes?

4) Why would God reveal these details about the future and then command Daniel to **seal up** the prophecy for the future?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Paul Lederach: The visions of Daniel stress the sovereignty of God in times of crisis along with the importance of prayer. God is the one who brings to naught the arrogance, deceit, violence, destruction, irreligion, and persecution of tyrants. God is also the one who strengthens, restores, purifies, and gives understanding to the faithful.

Paul Carter: in Daniel **chapter 8** we are hearing a story about a real person and a recurring historical pattern. Scholars refer to this as "**prophetic telescoping**". It means seeing the far future through the lens of a near future experience.

1. The antichrist arises out of the clash and chaos of empires
In his vision Daniel is transported outside of the empire of Babylon. Look at verse 2. Daniel says that in his vision he was transported as it were to the citadel in Susa which was in the province of Elam – and that is very interesting because when Daniel received this vision that city was not part of the Babylonian Empire. But it became one of the royal cities in the Persian Empire. You see, Daniel is seeing the future and in the future Babylon will no longer exist. He is being taken out of his context in order to see a conflict that is coming – a conflict OUT OF WHICH will emerge a subsequent human leader with a particular demonic animus toward the people of God.

2. The antichrist is a front for deeper and darker spiritual realities
So this little horn – this human leader – was animated by an otherworldly power. There is more going on here than just the rise and fall of human empires. This little horn assaults even the host of heaven!!

This is a man – animated by the spirit of the devil – who has set himself against Almighty God. He speaks arrogant things and he makes war even with the host of heaven.

3. The antichrist opposes the worship of God's people
Scholars of course equate this with the infamous actions of Antiochus against the people of Israel in 167 BC. By this point in history, many of the Jews were back in the land – having been released and resourced by Cyrus the Persian. In the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah we read about their return and the rebuilding of the temple. But here – many years later – Antiochus IV Epiphanes attempts 11 to completely eradicate their worship and religion. He forbade circumcision and in 167 BC he profaned the temple by introducing a sacred object - which appears to have been some kind of meteor - and he sacrificed a pig to it on the holy altar. This is the event that is referred to in the New Testament as "*the abomination of desolation*".

4. The antichrist throws down the truth of God
This story is recounted in 1 Maccabees. As Protestants we don't consider this book to

be CANONICAL – that is Holy Scripture – but we do consider it good history and it very helpful here. In 1 Maccabees 1:56-57 we are told:

> The books of the law that they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. 57 Anyone found possessing the book of the covenant, or anyone who adhered to the law, was condemned to death by decree of the king. (1 Maccabees 1:56–57 NRSV)

The antichrist cannot tolerate rival authority. He hates and throws down the inspired and authoritative Word of God.

5. The antichrist is a dog on a chain
What we are being told here is that from time to time, God will give limited permission to a human agent to persecute and harass the saints of God. But. As soon as God's purpose has been established, that leash will be withdrawn and that agent will be judged and destroyed.

The LOSS of worship that is prophesied here is tied to the sin and transgression of God's people. They abused the worship – they perverted the worship – they neglected the worship – and thus, the worship is temporarily taken away from them.

When they are given back the worship they treat it and conduct it as they should. The season of difficulty and tribulation functions as a refiner's fire.
https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/342014544634.pdf

Jeff Kingery: **End Times Insight**
You should know, that skeptics use Daniel **Ch 8** to cast a shadow of doubt on the book of Daniel. Because they don't believe that the bible could possibly, truly prophesy/predict the future. Yet Daniel **Ch 8** contains prophecy that was fulfilled so precisely, so specifically, so spectacularly that they conclude someone must've written this book after the history & then simply attached Daniel's name to it. . .

Why should it be thought fantastic (meaning beyond belief) that God should know the future, & that beyond that He's sovereign over the future? That His will, will be done? Surely that's one of the nuances of prophecy, to assure you & me that God is in fact not only real, but that He's really in control & we can trust in Him to bring His word to pass.

So the events of **Ch 8** come into focus for us 2 yrs after the vision of **Ch 7**. & In this vision Daniel discovers himself some 200 miles east of Babylon in Shushan (modern day western Iran about 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf) evidently on the bank (or w/in the vicinity) of the Ulai canal (river).

The significance being that this would be the place where a century later, the Persian king Xerxes would build a magnificent palace; it was one of the royal cities of Persia (now bear in mind that at this point Persia is no threat to Babylon, Babylon wouldn't

fall for more than a decade after this). (& To kind of help you connect the dots concerning your biblical history, the palace in Shushan would be where the events took place recorded in the **book of Esther** & also Nehemiah was Artaxerxes' cupbearer in the palace of Shushan.)

So just bear in mind that this vision takes place when Babylon was securely rooted in power. This vision will deal w/the rising of the Medo-Persian Empire & the Grecian Empire. . .

The reign of the notable leader of the Greek Empire (**Vs 8**) would be cut short. "*When he became strong, the large horn was broken.*" Alexander the Great had conquered the known world by the time he was 32 yrs old, but he was an alcoholic & as history goes he got drunk one night (having no more nations to conquer) & wandered out in the rain, he came down w/a fever and died in Babylon at just 32-33 yrs old. . .

Interesting little piece of history; after defeating Xerxes, Alexander kept going south to Israel & when he was set to come against them, the high priest (accompanied w/a delegation of priests) met him outside the city & showed him this passage written 200 yrs earlier. Because of what he saw in scripture, he spared Jerusalem out of reverence for Israel's God. We might say that the word was shared & the city was spared… Pretty amazing. . .

When was the **sanctuary cleansed**? History tell us that Judas Maccabaeus led a revolt in 165 BC that reclaimed & cleansed the temple. Here's the kicker, what's meant by 2,300 days? Literally, it's 2,300 mornings & evenings. If you take it to mean 2,300 days you go back to the time Epiphanes began his oppression of the Jews. If you take it to mean 2,300 daily sacrifices (which 1 was in the morning & 1 was in the evening) it comes out to 1,150 days, or just over 3 yrs which takes you back to the day he desecrated the sanctuary. Either way you want to look at it, the prophecy fulfilled it w/staggering accuracy which is why critics insist that the book of Daniel must've been written after the time of Daniel.

But upon the cleansing of the temple there was only 1 container of holy oil found to light the lampstand & it took 8 days to make a new batch. So they prayed & God miraculously sustained the oil until the new oil was ready & that's why the Jews today celebrate Hanukah, or the "Feast of Lights". Jesus Himself celebrated this holiday, it's mentioned in **John 10 Vs 22** where it mentions it being winter & Jesus was at the Feast of Dedication (the dedication of the cleansing of the Temple by Judas Maccabaeus).

Epiphanes was the foreshadow of which the A.C. is the substance. He was a precursor (if you will), a foretaste of what's to be fulfilled in the A.C. That's why he's sometimes called the A.C. of the O.T. He was on the scene before Jesus' 1st coming. The A.C. will be on the scene before His 2nd coming.
https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/812181231110.pdf

Stephen Miller: As explained in the discussion of **Dan 8:17**, Antiochus IV seems to be a type of the eschatological Antichrist. By examining the life of this ancient king, believers are instructed concerning the character and career of the future ruler. Many **parallels** exist between the two individuals, suggesting that Antiochus prefigured the Antichrist:

- Antiochus (**8:9**) and Antichrist (**7:8**) are symbolized by horns that were "little" or "small" at the beginning. Representing both kings as little horns supports the idea that one king prefigures the other.
- Antiochus was "*a stern-faced king*" (**8:23**), and Antichrist will have an "*imposing*" look (**7:20**). Both of these descriptions imply cruelty and harshness.
- Antiochus was "*a master of intrigue*" (**8:23**), and the brilliance of the Antichrist is suggested by the "*eyes*" of the horn (**7:8, 20**). The ability to offer seemingly correct solutions to the world's perplexing problems may be one factor that will catapult Antichrist to power.
- Antiochus had great power (**8:24**); Antichrist will have greater power (cf. **11:39; 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:7–8**). Yet **8:24** says that it was not Antiochus's "*own power*." His power was that of Satan, who controlled him, and this satanic inspiration was the reason he attempted to destroy God's people, the Jews. Antichrist also will be energized by Satan (cf. **2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:2**), and this is one reason he will attack God's people as well.
- Antiochus destroyed thousands (**8:24**); Antichrist will destroy more (**Rev 13:15; 16:13–16**).
- Antiochus prospered for a short while (**8:24**), and Antichrist will prosper for a brief time (**11:36; Rev 17:12**).
- Antiochus persecuted the saints (**8:24**); Antichrist also will oppress believers (**7:21, 25; Rev 13:7**).
- Antiochus was a deceiver (**8:25**); Antichrist will be the master deceiver (**2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:4, 14; 19:20**).
- Antiochus was proud (**8:25**). He called himself Epiphanes ("*the illustrious one*" or "*God manifest*"), although the Jews called him Epimanes ("*madman*"). Antichrist, however, will be one of the most arrogant individuals the world has ever known (**7:8, 11, 20, 25; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:5**).
- Antiochus blasphemed God (**8:25**); Antichrist will blaspheme God (**7:25; 11:36; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:5–6**).
- Antiochus was not killed by human hand (**8:25**), nor will be the Antichrist (**2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:19–20**).

Tremper Longman III: A **cosmic war** stands behind human conflict. In historical retrospect, we can assert with great certainty that the climactic battle described in this chapter as instigated by the small horn is the persecution of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV against observant Jewish people in the mid-second century B.C. However, the prophetic description of this future event makes it clear that more is going on behind the scenes. We await **chapter 10** for an even more dramatic disclosure, but we already get an overture to the theme that a spiritual conflict stands behind the earthly one. It is not

Antiochus versus the Maccabees alone, but it is a little horn who presumes to be a god who fights against the Prince of princes and his starry hosts. A cosmic battle is ultimately at issue here. A fuller discussion of this theme is found in **chapter 10. . .**

The **temple** was more than a building; it was a symbol of **God's presence** with his people, hence a source of life and hope. Its desecration at the hands of Antiochus was an assault against God and cause for despair among the faithful. But the restoration of the temple meant a new life, the possibility of intense fellowship with God once again. We will see in **chapter 12** that this too anticipates even greater realities than temple worship. There we learn that the faithful can hope for resurrection and a blessed eternal life in the presence of God beyond death itself. . .

The **signs of the time** do not intend to tell us that we are living in the shadow of Christ's return, but rather to remind us that we live in the last days, the days between the first and second coming of Christ. When we hear of an earthquake, we are not to say, "The time is nigh." Rather, we are to remind ourselves that we are still on this side of the consummation. We are to remind ourselves to be prepared, because Christ will appear "*like a thief in the night*" (**1 Thess. 5:2**).

That leads us back to the function of the highly symbolic numbers in Daniel and elsewhere, which are so difficult to figure out. Their purpose is not for date-setting but for **comfort**. They remind us that God knows what he is doing. God is sovereign and has set a limit on how long the present evil world will oppress us. These facts should comfort us by reminding us that **God is in control** of the situation.

I submit for our consideration that the misuse of these apocalyptic dates is an attempt to wrest control from God and place it firmly in our own sinful grasp. But the result is disruption in the church and in our lives. Such vain speculation leads . . . to a complete disregard for present realities. **God calls us to live in the present while waiting with hope for the future.**

Iain Duguid: Let this vision of **Daniel 8** cut your monsters down to size: these monsters that seek to hurt you and trample you are nothing more than big sheep in the Lord's eyes. If the divine shepherd is with you, he will not let them trample you utterly into the dust. The menacing world that is out of your control is never beyond his control. The one who raises up world conquerors and then consigns them in turn to the pages of ancient history books is the same one who controls your personal story as well. If you belong to Christ, the whole world revolves in the hand of the one who cares for you far more deeply than you can imagine. As a result, nothing in the present or in the future can ever separate you from his love (see **Rom. 8:38–39**). . .

The cross is thus the place where God gave his final answer to our rebellion and transgression, as well as to Satan's enmity. At the cross, Jesus took upon himself the full weight of all of our transgression and rebellion, dealing once and for all with our sin. If ever there was a "time of wrath," it was during those six hours when Jesus hung on the cross, bearing the wrath of God against our wickedness and idolatry. His

devastation there brought God's wrath against our sin to a final end. There at the cross he broke the sting of death, which is the power of sin, and so guaranteed the ultimate happy ending to our story. Just as Christ was raised from the dead in glory, so also all those who are in him will one day rise in glory, on the day when God's timetable is complete.

The cross is therefore the **guarantee** that God's plan will always prevail in the face of our weakness, rebellion, and sin, and in spite of the fierce enmity of Satan and all of his hosts. Because of the victory won on the cross, the gates of hell can never prevail against Christ's flock. To be sure, evil remains awful and powerful in this world. Sin still has devastating effects, whether it comes from outside or inside the church, and it will not simply pass away as our world matures. Our path to heaven often takes us through the valley of deep darkness, through horrible realities in the here and now that may be the fruits of our own sin, or of the sins of others, or of the enmity of powerful spiritual forces.

Yet in the midst of that sobering reflection, we must never lose sight of the glories of heaven and the fact that **God's timetable** is the one that directs events. His timetable will eventually draw our time on this earthly stage to a close and usher in God's victory. We don't know when that end will be, either for us as individuals, or for the world as a whole. The end may indeed be nigh, or it may still be some time away, but either way we can still live in its radiant light and long for the coming of the dawn. On that final day, the question that God will ask each one of us will be, "What have you done with the gift of my Son, Jesus Christ? Have you submitted your heart to him? Have you received him as Savior and Lord, looking to his righteousness to atone for your rebellion? Or have you rebelliously thought to justify yourself through your own efforts?"

What is more, in the time that remains before that final day comes, our **God remains in control** of this world that he has made, even when we pass through the valley of darkness. In spite of our own worst failures and the enemy's best efforts, God will bring all things to their proper end at the time he has determined. He will bring the nations to himself and sanctify each one of us through the slow but persistent work of his Spirit. In the meantime, we are called to be faithful and obedient, trusting in Christ alone and giving thanks daily for the cross, the place of his triumph over our sin. As we wait, we are to look forward with longing eyes to the day of his return, crying out, "*How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled*?" How long will it be until the darkness will finally be over and the daylight will come? How long until the sun of righteousness will rise, and his saints will shine with him forever and ever? How long until we are sanctified through and through and cleansed of all of our remaining sin? How long, O Lord? Come quickly, Lord Jesus, and bring your great work to its completion in us.

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **The False Messiah and His Forerunners**
Introduction: cf. rise of Hitler to power. Inflation went haywire and their currency became devalued. The people were ready to listen to any demagogue that came along, anyone that was willing to promise them a way of prosperity. I think that Hitler really

is a foreshadowing and a preview of that coming world dictator, the Antichrist.

Big Idea: Five characters in this chapter that point to the coming Antichrist. Five characters, you say, that might prepare the way for the coming of this world leader.

Preliminary observations:

- From the beginning of chapter 8 until the end of the book the text is written in Hebrew. These prophecies and these visions will pertain to primarily the Jewish people. The message to the people is that God still has a future for Israel.
- Before things get better, they're going to get Worse.

I. Daniel, the Prophet Himself – 8:1-2

A. Daniel's Revelation

Daniel had this vision before the events of Chapter 5 unfolded. And that's important because I'll tell you why, because really the vision, the first vision that he has speaks about the Medo-Persian Empire. And so think of it like this. When Daniel was called in to interpret the handwriting on the wall, he wasn't surprised. He wasn't shocked. You know why? Because God had already given him this vision about the Medo-Persian Empire, about it being a strong empire. And so he wasn't shocked. He wasn't surprised at all. **Amos 3:7**

While the world is in panic, God's people are in peace. God gives us prophecy. He gives us insights about the future. That is the whole reason behind the book of Revelation.

B. Daniel's Reaction

I think there's a humility in his response to this dream. Cf. **8:15** – same concept *I, even I*, in the Hebrew, this is emphatic. Literally, it says, *to me, I, Daniel*. Three times, it's emphatic. *To me, I, Daniel*. God has revealed this. He felt unworthy and inadequate to be entrusted with this huge revelation about the future.

8:2 -- the idea here is that he was taken up in a vision. He wasn't there physically, but in a vision, God transported him there. God showed him this place. Shushan (Susa) = It's located about 230 miles east of Babylon and 120 miles north of the Persian Gulf. And so, in essence, it's way out there nowhere. It's in the desert. at the time of Daniel's vision, it would become the capital of the Medo-Persian Empire, but there was nothing special about this place. It was just someplace way out there in the desert.

"*beside the Ulai Canal*" -- This is the only time that this Hebrew word is ever used for river. It was a man-made river. It was a wide canal.

C. Daniel's Request – 8:15

While he is seeking the meaning of this vision, the Bible says there stood before him the appearance of one as a man. Now, this was an imposing figure. The Hebrew word is Gabber, and it means strong or mighty. And the term here describes a mighty being in human form.

- Same say this was Gabriel; but in vs. 16 this same voice actually cries out to

Gabriel

- Just a regular angel? But this own speaks with a voice of authority and Gabriel is one of the chief ranking angels.
- I think this is Christ -- a Christophany, an Old Testament appearance of Christ.

He calls to Daniel, referring to his as “son of man”. We saw this title, son of man, in chapter seven, right? That was referring to Jesus. Here, the term son of man is a bit different. It is *ben adam*. meaning **son of Adam**. And this is used to emphasize Daniel's weakness, Daniel's mortality, reminding us that the word Adam literally means ground. We were formed from the dust of the ground. This same term is used of Ezekiel 93 times with the same kind of meaning.

Daniel, all these things are going to unfold in the end. This is going to play out and play out until you get to the end. The end of what? The end of human history. The end times. And he's basically saying it's going to stretch out. It'll stretch out all the way to the end. Now, the reason I emphasize that is because there are some who come to the end of Chapter eight. And they see Cyrus and they see Alexander the Great and they see Antiochus Epiphanes, but they don't see the Antichrist. They don't see that. And I think that you have to look at this and say, wait a minute, this vision. stretches out all the way to the end. So it's going to involve the end time.

When it says *deep sleep*, the Hebrew word *radam*, it's the same word that was used of Adam when he was placed under a deep sleep when God took one of his ribs. It is so incredible. He just fainted flat out in this vision. He just fell literally into a sleep. I think it's the response of extreme emotional excitement. There was this abnormal loss of consciousness on Daniel's part. He just passed out.

11:36 -- the Antichrist is who he's referring to will last until God's indignation over his disobedient people is finally done. And so, again, I say this is something that's going to happen in the end. Look at the history of the Jews today. It is a history of persecution and suffering of punishment and then a piece. It just seems like there have been periods of peace, periods of punishment. That has always been the legacy of God's people, Israel. And here's the marvel. The marvel is, is that Israel has still survived through it all. They're still there. Still a nation. Still recognized. God has chastised them. But God has also miraculously preserved this nation.

All this indignation will continue to mount as we move into the Tribulation period. And I believe that, of course, you know, some of you already who know prophecy, that at the beginning of the Tribulation period, the Antichrist will make a covenant of peace. And then midway through, he will do what? He will break that covenant. And then after that, he will fiercely persecute God's people, the Jews. And during that time, when the indignation is poured out, when God says, OK, that's enough, Christ will come back. The Jewish people will look upon the Messiah. The Bible says in Zechariah, they will look on him whom they have pierced and begin to mourn for him as an only son. And that's when in **Romans 11**, all Israel will be saved.

Applications:

- God sovereignly uses men as his instruments to accomplish his purpose.
- The difficult things in scripture should motivate us to diligently seek for understanding.
- We must depend upon divine illumination to understand scripture.
- The proper response to divine revelation is reverence and humility.
- Bible prophecy should give us a burden for the lost.

II. Cyrus, King of Persia – 8:3-4

There's **one single ram** = a united kingdom. The symbol of the Persian armies was a ram. Also, it's interesting to know in the signs of the zodiac. which come, of course, from the occult. The sign of the ram, Ares, has always been connected with Persia. And, of course, you know all that stuff came out of the Babylonian Empire in Babylon. And always the ram symbolized Persia. And so this seems to be a fitting symbol for the Medo-Persian Empire. So we see here one ram that represents this empire.

Then we see **two horns**. Normally, rams have two horns, but it's unusual for one to be higher than the other. And again, the scholars believe that this, of course, represents the two components of the empire, the Medo-Persian Empire. And the one horn that grew up later and got higher than the other, that's another important detail. Let me give you a little bit of history about the Medo-Persian Empire. Media, or the Medians, they were already a major power before Cyrus came along. Cyrus, the king of Persia. In fact, it was the Medians that helped the Babylonians conquer Assyria. So this was already a big empire.

And what happened was, Persia, a small country holding less than 50,000 square miles of territory, was relatively insignificant. And what happened to the Persians was that they literally came up out of nowhere. A great leader, Cyrus, who was a genius, came to power and the whole empire began to grow. And before you know it now, Persia is a world power. And he went out conquering and he conquered the Median empire and the two came together, but Persia was greater.

Then we have **three directions**. Notice what happens in verse four. And I saw the ram pushing westward. and northward and southward, so that no beast might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand. But he did according to his will, and he became great." So this ram was invincible. He began to push in three different directions. Let me give you the history of this. When the Medo-Persian Empire began to expand under the leadership of Cyrus, it went first west and it took Syria, and then it took Asia Minor, and then it took Babylonia, and then it pushed north, and it took Armenia, and all the region around the Caspian Sea, and then it pushed southward, and it took Egypt, and it took Ethiopia.

Go to Isaiah chapter 45. This was written. 150 years before Daniel. OK, so this is farther back than Daniel, and this is one of the incredible prophecies of the Old Testament. You know why? Because there's a proper name that's given. Did you know that there's only two places in the Old Testament where God prophesies someone who's

going to come and he mentions the name? This is one place right here. God says, I'm just going to lay out a map in front of you and it's going to be an easy road for you. So it wasn't the genius of Cyrus. It was because that was what God had planned. That was the providence of God. God was working there and.

8:4 -- Cyrus was self-willed. He did what he wanted. He was a man of pride. And by the way, remember what I said that all of these rulers, these Gentile rulers, in some way foreshadow who the Antichrist, which the Antichrist will be like when he comes. It's going to be pretty easy for him. He's going to take the world with relative ease because this is part of God's plan. And he will make himself great. He will magnify himself and he will act in pride. Cyrus starts out as a little horn and then he grows big. Remember Daniel chapter seven. That's exactly how the Antichrist is described. He is a little horn that gets big. And so Cyrus was God's instrument that God used in that day.

III. Alexander the Great of Greece – 8:5-8

A. The Goat Represents Greece

Here enters a goat. The question is, who is this right when the Medo-Persian Empire is at its zenith? Here comes a goat. Literally, the Hebrew says a buck among the goats or a male goat. Who is it? Well, we don't have to wonder who it is, because you remember that last week when we saw Daniel's vision, we looked at the interpretation and Gabriel, the angel, gave him the interpretation. So drop down to verse 20 and verse 21, and we'll see who this is. In verse 20, it says, The ram which thou sawest, having two horns, are the kings of the Media and Persia. and the rough goat is the king of Greece and the great horn is that between his eyes is the first king. And so this go to comes along represents in the Grecian Empire. And he comes from the West.

Did you know the first Greek colony was established by an oracle? Normally they would have a woman who would prophesy and they would go to an oracle to get a word from the from the divine world. And according to an oracle, they were to take a goat and use that goat for a guide to find out where they were going to establish the first city. And so that's exactly what they did. They got a goat and that goat led them. and it led him to the region of Greece and in gratitude for the ghost leading them right in the right direction. They called the city AG. You know what that means in Greek, the Goat City. In fact, the name of the sea upon whose shores the city was built is called the Asian Sea or the Goat Sea. And so it's incredible. The first city of Greece was established by a goat by the way that he could overcome the ram as we see here in the prophecy.

The Greek culture was intimidated by the Persians. They were intimidated by their power. And the reason is because the Medo-Persians literally took the Greeks and made them slaves. And so they were chafing under the power of the Persians. And what happened is it worked up a hatred. and the Greeks towards the Persians. The Persians thought they were better. They looked down on the Greeks, and so Greeks built up this animosity and this hatred for the Persians.

B. It touches not the ground

That represents the **speed** by which this Greek world conquered the then known world. It moves so rapidly that it seemed as if his feet did not touch the ground. Now, what does that remind you of? You remember, we studied in Daniel chapter seven. The Greek Empire was represented by a leopard and he had four wings. The Greeks came to power faster than anyone before them. In 10 years, the Greeks conquered the entire civilized world without losing one battle.

C. The Notable Horn – 8:5

Now, we know that goats have two horns, but not this one. This one was unique. He has one horn. It's very prominent. It's very great. Now, who does he speak of? This notable horn is Alexander the Great. It seemed like he was destined for great things. Youknow, his mother told him that he was conceived by the gods. And so she claimed that he was born by the gods. She also said that he was a descendant of Achilles and Hercules.

In fact, there's one story about Alexander the Great. When he was just a kid, there was a family had a horse that no one could break. And when he was just a boy, Alexander the Great said, I'll do it. And he went out there and he did. He broke the horse. And according to history, that horse was the one that he rode all throughout his conquering years. That was his horse.

But he was a military genius, and perhaps the greatest military genius in all human history. He was born in 356 BC. He was a son of a conqueror, a man by the name of Philip of Macedon. And Philip had united the Greeks in the Macedonian Empire, and he was planning himself to invade the Medo-Persian Empire because of the hatred that the Greeks had for the Persians. But something happened to Philip, and that is he was murdered. So Alexander the Great decided to take up the cause and at the age of 21, he became king. And here's another fact about him. You might not know that he was tutored under Aristotle. And so he was a pretty smart guy back in that day.

D. The fury of his power

He attacked the ram with hot, white anger. Tthis ego just comes against the ram with tremendous force and anger and bitterness. That's the idea here. A lot of **intensity** in that. let's go back to what happened in history. What happened? Well, Two years after Alexander the Great became the king, he started to attack. He rounded up 3,500 troops, and he crossed over into the Medo-Persian territory with just 3,500 soldiers. As soon as he crossed over, he crossed over the Grenache River, and when he got to the other side, you know what he found? He found a massive Persian army waiting on him. I mean, he was tremendously outnumbered. You know what he did? He built the anger of his soldiers by reminding them who they were fighting. And history tells us that the Greeks ran into the Persian army with such anger and such fury that it was almost as if they had supernatural strength. And that small army, compared to the Persian army, totally devastated the Persians, just took them over. You know why? Because Alexander's men were white hot with the heat of anger against the Persians. And that was a major victory.

E. The great horn was broken – 8:8

What happened to this big horn right again in the zenith of his power the horn broke And what does that speak about well? Right after Alexander the Great conquered the world and we all know the story of it He was an alcoholic. He couldn't control himself and at the age of 33 in Babylon he died of a drunken orgy one historian thinks he may have even choked in his own vomit. But he died in 323 at the age of 33, having never really had the opportunity to rule over the kingdom that he conquered. He just conquered and then he was broken and then he was taken out.

Again, that's a picture of the Antichrist, folks. When the Antichrist comes to power, his horn is going to be broken. It's going to be broken by the Lord Jesus Christ. By the way, here's another interesting fact. Alexander had the people worship him as God. That was something that some of the Greece resented. But that's what exactly what the Antichrist is going to do when he comes. He will have people worship him as God.

F. Four winds of heaven – 8:8

The Bible says four leaders would replace him. When Alexander died, his empire was divided among his four generals. And remember, we mentioned this in Daniel chapter 7. Daniel is prophesying 200 years before the fact. Now, someone might say, well, he had four generals. I mean, it would make sense that the empire would be divided up into four generals. That's that's easy. Oh, really? Alexander had two sons. Both of those sons were killed. And the four generals didn't just take, they didn't just get together and say, well, let's divide it up. There was 22 years of infighting, of intrigue, of all kind of happenings going on. Actually, there were five generals that were trying to grab the empire. One finally let go, and four ended up getting it 22 years later. These four kings would never reach the same power and prominence that Alexander the Great achieved.

<u>Applications:</u>

- Bible prophecy instills great confidence in the Word of God.
- Fulfilled prophecy should give us peace in dark days.
- God uses men as instruments to accomplish his purposes.

IV. Antiochus Epiphanes – 8:9-14

Out of the four horns [after Alexander the Great died and his kingdom was divided up], then comes another little horn. We've seen a little horn before. Remember, there's one in **chapter seven**, but that's not to be confused with the little horn here in **chapter eight**, because the little horn in **chapter seven** is the Antichrist. He comes out of the Roman Empire. But here is a little horn that comes out of the Greek Empire, and he is a forerunner of the Antichrist. And it is this little horn that is Antiochus Epiphanes. So he starts out small and he expands as we've seen other scholars agree that this is the eighth ruler of the Seleucid Greek Empire, Antiochus Epiphanes, who reigned from 175 to 163 BC.

You have what is referred to as the 400 silent years and all these things that happen take place in that period of time when Greek power dominated the land of Israel. Antiochus rose to a place of prominence during this time. Up until that time, the land of Palestine was under the control of the Ptolemies. These were the generals that came out of

Ptolemy, one of the generals that took part of Alexander's empire. But Antiochus had a father who was a very powerful man, and he defeated these kings. And so that meant that he took possession of Palestine. And when he took possession of Palestine, he wanted to change the whole region into Greek, or he wanted the Greek culture to dominate that area. And that was even more so when Antiochus Epiphanes became the king. Once he became the king, he really turned up the notch. He really wanted to Hellenize all of the Palestinians.

In between the Old and New Testaments, there's a section in that Catholic Bible, and it's called the what? Apocrypha, right? Now, some people ask, why don't we use the Apocrypha? Well, because we're Baptists, amen? But let me tell you why. Those are not inspired books. That those books are really the really the only value that we really can derive from those apocryphal books are historical things, but they're not inspired scripture. They're not part of the canon. and early writers recognize this, okay? But we can look into some of those books to get some historical facts that might help us.

Antiochus Epiphanes becomes ruler in this region. And the first thing he does is he brings into Israel or into the land of Palestine a man named Jason who is the next high priest He becomes the next high priest and according to this historical book. He did it in an underhanded manner. We're not sure how it happened, but somehow Antiochus worked it out to where Jason became the high priest in Israel. Jason immediately wanted to Hellenize everyone. He wanted to make everything Greek. He wanted to stop Jewish religion. And one of the things that he did in order to do this was right outside the tower where the Holy of Holies is located, right under the shadow of the Holy of Holies, he built a place of exercise. He built a sports arena. It was the custom of Greeks to participate in Olympic type sports totally naked, totally in the nude? The only covering they had was a thin coat of oil that they put on their body. That was the Olympic pattern. And nakedness was a major issue of the Jewish people, especially the fact that you had this stadium, this gymnasium, right next door to the Holy of Holies. The Greeks were also inviting the Jews to join in the games. So what you had going there as well is what the record says, is that priests abandoned the temple [up on the mountain], they ran down into the Colosseum [in the valley where all could see], and there they also began to participate in the games stark naked like the rest of the Greeks. They began to cast aside the sign of circumcision. All of this caused the Maccabeans to revolt.

Antiochus would persecute the Jewish saints in Palestine. He would trample upon them. That's the idea of severe persecution. The Antichrist will do exactly the same thing. Remember, he is a forerunner of the coming Antichrist. He started out with the worship of Zeus and Apollo at the stadium at the foot of that holy place, as we said before. But pretty soon what he did was he brought that worship inside the temple. That was the next step. He set up Zeus in the Holy of Holies. If any Jew participated in any Jewish ceremony, if you kept the Sabbath, if you circumcised your child, if you offered a sacrifice, the penalty was death.

They came up with a. a mockery of his name, Antiochus Epiphanes, they would call it

Antiochus Epimenes, which in the Hebrew means Antiochus the madman. He was a madman to these people. Look at verse number 11. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of hosts. and by him in the daily sacrifice was taken away and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. That is, he makes himself equal with God.

The temple was not destroyed, but it was desecrated. It was brought low. You say, how did he do that? Well. Antiochus walked one day into the place of sacrifice into the Holy of Holies and he took a pig [according to the Jewish people that was an unclean animal] and he cut it down the middle and he all the blood he just he just sprinkled all over the place -- all over the altar and And the Holy of Holies on the mercy seat. He just desecrated the Holy of Holies. He sprinkled the fluid of that pig all over the place. And that made the temple unclean. That was what the Bible calls the **abomination of desolation**. And then he took some of the pig's meat and he shoved it down the throat of the priests who were there.

So he encourages the Jews to join with him in all of this abomination. And there is a group of them that begin to follow him. They burned and cut up the law. The horn continued and prospered.

8:13 – Two angels appear who are observing all of these horrible atrocities. And one says to the other, how long is this going to go on? How long is this going to happen? And then the answer comes in verse number 14. And he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. Now, remember that God is going to give the Antichrist, he's going to give him a certain amount of time, right? Three and a half years? And the Bible says that unless God cuts that short, no one would be able to survive. When did that cleansing happen? We do know that on December the twenty fifth one sixty five B.C. Under the leadership of one of the Maccabees, Judas Maccabeus, the great leader of that family who led the revolt against Antiochus, history tells us that he came in and he cleansed the temple December the 25th, 165 BC. Now listen, this is what's really amazing. We can count backwards, right? You can start at December the 25th, 165 BC, and you can go backwards how many days? 2300 days, right? You figure back and where does that leave us? You wind up at September the 6th, 171 B.C. You say, what is history record happened on September the 6th, 171 B.C.? Well, history is pretty much silent there. We don't know. But now we do because the Bible tells us, right? This is more historical than anything else. This is when it all began. This is when the Holocaust began, on September 6, 171.

V. Antichrist Himself – 8:23-25

He's the king of fierce countenance. That simply means he has a stern, strong face. He understands dark sentences. That is, literally, he understands difficult problems. And it may signify here that he even has the power from demons to be able to do this demonic genius. And then verse 24 says, and his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power. We know who that power is. That's the power of Satan that will work in him. And he shall destroy wonderfully and shall prosper and practice and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. He's energized by Satan. He will do far more than what? Antiochus did as far as destroying the people the Bible says he will prosper he will

continue He will destroy the people of God

He shall also stand up against the prince of princes. Who is that? That's Jesus Christ. But he shall be broken without hand. Without hand means without human hands, without the aid of any human power, supernaturally this Antichrist will be broken. His time will come to an end.

Both began modestly, but they increase in power. Both blaspheme God with mouths that speak great things. Both persecute the Jewish people. Both claim to be gods and put images in the temple. Both impose their own religion on the people. Both are opposed by a believing remnant that knows God. Both are energized by the devil. Both are great deceivers. Both appear to succeed marvelously and seem to be invincible. But both will finally, ultimately be defeated. Antiochus Epiphanes is defeated by Judas Maccabeus and the Antichrist one day will be defeated by the Lord Jesus Christ.

TEXT: Daniel 9:1-27

TITLE: PROPHECY OF SEVENTY-SEVENS UNFOLDS ISRAEL'S FUTURE

BIG IDEA:
DANIEL'S PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND PETITION FOR DELIVERANCE PROMPT REVELATION OF GOD'S FUTURE PROGRAM FOR ISRAEL

INTRODUCTION:

S. Lewis Johnson: It is undoubtedly true that this is one of the great prophecies of the Old Testament, perhaps one of the most important in all of the word of God. So, Edward Denny, a student of prophecy once called it "**the backbone of prophecy**." Some interesting things have been said about it by some of the older commentators as well. John Owen, one of the greatest of the Puritan theologians said that "Because this prophecy sets forth the time and coming of the Messiah, it justly has esteemed the racks and tortures of the rabbis." And an old interpreter of the prophecy said that "It is a passage of a great importance containing such a prediction of the time, the purposes and consequences of the coming and death of the Messiah, his rejection by the Jews and the destruction of their temple, city, and nation as cannot be equaled in the Old Testament."

The purpose of the "seventy sevens" is to show what will take place before Israel is restored to her status in God's plan. "Seventy sevens" or four hundred and ninety years Daniel is told must elapse before Israel is to enter into the promises that belong to them. They have four hundred and ninety years of discipline to undergo, and four hundred and ninety years of discipline to undergo within the broader amount of time of the times of the Gentiles, which began in six hundred and five BC when Nebuchadnezzar took the city of Jerusalem, and will continue according to earlier prophecies in the Book of Daniel, such as **chapter 2**, until the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who will establish the kingdom of God upon the earth.

But four hundred and ninety years are taken out of the times of the Gentiles in order to accomplish certain things for, as Daniel is told, "*your people and your Holy City*." So the four hundred and ninety years are carved out, so to speak, of the times of the Gentiles, which now have been going on for twenty-five hundred plus years, but the four hundred and ninety years are designed to deal with Israel and the Holy City.

Tremper Longman III: Interest in this chapter has usually bypassed the prayer for the more enigmatic prophecy of the seventy weeks. This is unfortunate, for the prayer contains much rich theology and important practical application to those of us reading it today.

David Cooper: Thus the prophecy of Daniel 9 shows clearly

- the period of reconstruction under Zerubbabel, a period of forty-nine years;
- the next era reaching from the restoration to the execution of Messiah;
- the third epoch extending from the crucifixion of Messiah to the Tribulation

Period--the Christian Era.

- The last of this 490-year period is the seventieth week, the Tribulation. Here the prophecy concludes;
- but from related passages we know that the great Millennial Era of our Lord will follow immediately the seventieth week of Daniel.

Stephen Miller: Although the message revealed to Daniel in this chapter is called a "*vision*" (*mar'eh*) in **v. 23**, Daniel did not see animals here rising out of a sea or rams and goats as in the previous two visions. Neither did Gabriel appear in vision but in bodily form. Therefore the "*vision*" of **chap. 9** may be thought of more as a **prophetic revelation** (cf. **Prov 29:18; Obad 1; Nah 1:1; Hab 2:2**).

Daniel 9 contains a record of the prophet's prayer on behalf of the covenant people, Israel, and God's response to that prayer. Primarily for this reason the covenant name, Yahweh, appears in this chapter (seven times), although it is not found elsewhere in the book.

(:1-2) PROLOGUE – BACKGROUND FOR THE SEVENTY-SEVENS PROPHECY

A. (:1-2a) Timing of the Prophecy

"*In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans-- 2 in the first year of his reign*"

Stephen Miller: Daniel received this revelation in the first year of Darius the Mede (ca. 538 B.C.). Thus the events of this chapter transpired approximately twelve years after Daniel's second vision recorded in **chap. 8**. If taken captive about age fifteen in 605 B.C., he would have been over eighty years of age in 538 B.C.

Bob Deffinbaugh: **Verses 1-3** have set the scene. With the death of Belshazzar came the end of the Babylonian empire. The rise of Darius to power commenced the Medo-Persian empire. Daniel realizes that the time of Israel's chastening has ended, and the time for the Jews' return to the land of Israel is imminent. So he begins to pray for the restoration of the nation Israel. His prayer, recorded in **verses 4-19**, may be typical of the prayers he faithfully offered up three times a day.

John Whitcomb: Darius the Mede – appointed by Cyrus to reign over the Chaldeans, the Fertile Crescent, the eastern section of which was the Tigris and Euphrates river valley, the bottom of which section was none other than Daniel and his three friends.

B. (:2b) Terminus of the Seventy Year Judgment on Jerusalem

"*I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years*
which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet
for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years."

John Whitcomb: Jeremiah was God's appointed prophet to observe and explain the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. and the subsequent destruction of the temple in 586 and the awful things that would happen under the wicked sons of Josiah. Jeremiah had reported that the Jewish nation would endure 70 years of captivity in Babylon. Daniel is now wondering when these 70 years of captivity were going to come to an end and what would happen subsequently.

Stephen Miller: "*According to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet*" is a strong affirmation of **verbal inspiration**. The writer of Daniel believed that the sacred Scriptures, in this case the prophecies of Jeremiah, were the very words of God delivered to the world through a human instrument. . .

Since 605 B.C. was the year when the first captives were taken to Babylon (Daniel and his friends), the year that Judah came under Babylonian domination, and the year the prophecy was first given, it is reasonable to assume that Jeremiah intended this as the beginning date for the seventy-year captivity period. Cyrus issued the decree releasing the captives in 538/537 B.C., and the exiles returned shortly thereafter. Considering that the seventy years is a round number, the sixty-eight or so years of the exile is an amazing fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy. Even R. A. Anderson acknowledges: "As a 'round figure' prognostication Jeremiah's prophecy was quite accurate." As Daniel studied Jeremiah's prophecy, he came to realize that the seventy-year captivity period was now drawing to a close.

This passage illustrates that Daniel believed in the reality of predictive prophecy. Jeremiah had foretold the end of the exilic period seventy years in advance, and Daniel fully expected this prophecy to be fulfilled. Neither did Daniel "symbolize" these seventy years but **took the prophecy literally**. This is the safest procedure for believers today as they study prophecies of future events.

Paul Lederach: From the fall of Nineveh (612 B.C.) to the fall of Babylon (539 B.C.) is 73 years. From Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of Egypt (605 B.C.) to the decree for return (538 B.C.) is nearly 70 years. Since Jeremiah refers to "*Babylon's seventy years*" (**29:10a**), they are best taken as an imprecise reference to the period of Babylon's domination over surrounding nations. It is about a **lifetime**, such as Daniel's (**Ps. 90:10; Ezra 3:12; Hag. 2:3**), and certainly much longer than the false prophet Hananiah's 594 B.C. prediction of two years! (**Jer. 28**).

Iain Duguid: In these oracles Jeremiah announced that the Lord's plan was to subject his people to Babylon for seventy years for their sin, but at the end of that time God would act to judge the Babylonians and to bring his people home. What triggered Daniel's interest in this prophecy was likely the overthrow of the Babylonian empire by the Medes and the Persians, and the death of King Belshazzar at the hands of Darius, the new ruler. Evidently, God was now judging the king of Babylon and his nation, just as he had promised. Therefore, even though it wasn't quite seventy years yet since the destruction of Judah, Daniel began to pray with greater intensity for the fulfillment of the second half of this prophecy: the gracious restoration of God's people to his land. . .

This increased intensity in prayer is marked by Daniel's decision to fast and pray in sackcloth and ashes, signs of intense mourning and repentance for his people's sin. . .

Daniel's prayer essentially consists of three elements: **invocation**, **confession**, and **petition**. Daniel began by recognizing and acknowledging who God is (**invocation**); then he confessed the sins of his community and acknowledged the rightness of God's judgment upon them (**confession**), and finally, he pled with God to fulfill his purposes for his people (**petition**).

Tremper Longman III: Rarely do we see such an explicit reference from one biblical book to another as we see here with Daniel's appeal to Jeremiah. Some scholars are unwilling to speak of a closed prophetic canon or an authoritative Scripture at this point, but it is certainly hard to avoid the implication of the latter. What Jeremiah has written, after all, is referred to as the "*word of the LORD*." Here we see the equation between the prophet's words and the word of the one who commissioned him.

S. Lewis Johnson: So, here is Daniel having received two great visions and the great revelation concerning the future. It is near the end of the seventy years of the captivity and so far as Daniel knew at the end of the seventy years of captivity Israel would be restored to the land, and they would enter in to the blessings of the covenant of God. But he has been told here that he lived under the reign of Babylon, he has been told that there are going to be **three world empires** before the final consummation of things. And so you can see how he was perplexed over this because with only 18-20 or 24 months left, Daniel so far as he understood from the perspective of prophecy that he had there would have to rise three more great world empires in that shorter time. So, he was very much **puzzled** by that. He knew that the seventy years of captivity was drawing to an end, he thought that at that time Israel would be restored to their prominence and blessing, but he also now has been told there would be four world empires before the coming of the kingdom of God. So, Daniel to put it in our terms, has a problem.

Now, in answer to that problem, we have the revelation of **the prophecy of the seventy sevens**. For in this prophecy now Daniel will be given some temporal information, which will enable him to understand that the rise and fall of the empires is not within the next 18 months to two years, but rather is going to take place over a rather **lengthy period of time.**

I. (:3-19) DANIEL'S PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND PETITION FOR DELIVERANCE

A. (:3-4) Invocation -- Seeking the Covenant Lovingkindness of Israel's Great and Awesome God

1. **(:3)** Attention Aided by Outward Expression of Contrition

"*So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him*
by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes."

Stephen Miller: His appeal was directed toward "*the Lord [ʾădōnāy] God*." The name *ʾădōnāy* means "owner, ruler, or sovereign" and identifies Yahweh as the owner and ruler of the universe. Not only was he able to hear Daniel's prayer, but he had the power to direct the affairs of world history in order to answer his prayer.

Andrew Hill: The combined ritual acts of fasting and donning sackcloth and ashes (**v.3c**) were a sign of mourning and repentance in the OT (cf**. Ne 9:1; Est 4:1–4; Jnh 3:6**). The discipline of fasting is sometimes a part of the preparation process for receiving revelation from God (cf. **Ex 34:28; Dt 9:9**). Here the two acts of mourning and seeking revelation merge as Daniel prays "to comprehend God's purpose in the destruction of Jerusalem" (Lucas, 236). According to Wood, 234, all three actions (fasting, wearing a coarse sackcloth garment, and sprinkling ashes on one's head) demonstrate the degree of the **burden** Daniel carries for his people and are "customary for the day when genuine **contriteness** of heart was felt."

2. **(:4)** Adoration Expressed

"*And I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, 'Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,*"

Stephen Miller: This prayer is a model for believers today as they approach God. After a brief introduction (**v. 4a**) it proceeds with adoration of the Lord (**v. 4b**), is followed by confession of personal and national sin (**vv. 5–14**), and concludes with the prophet's petition (**vv. 15–19**). Here is the proper order, for only after the Lord is praised and sin confessed is the believer qualified to offer requests to the holy God.

Iain Duguid: The contrast could not be starker between the faithful and holy God, who is true to all of his promises, and the faithless and unholy people, who had broken all of their commitments and rebelled against their overlord. Under the terms of the covenant that God made with his people at Mount Sinai, such a combination could only ever have one result: the destruction and exile of God's people from the land of promise (see **Deut. 28**). Because the Lord is righteous and faithful, he had to follow through with this threatened judgment, pouring out his fierce wrath on Jerusalem, his chosen city and dwelling place (**Dan. 9:16**), making his people the object of deserved scorn among the nations all around them. So Daniel confessed the sin of his people and acknowledged the justice of God's judgment, severe though it had been. There was no effort on Daniel's part to make excuses for Israel or to challenge the fairness of God's dealings with them. Israel fully deserved the fate they had experienced for their rebellion against such a holy and kind God.

Andrew Hill: The word "*love*" or "*lovingkindness*" (NASB) is used as an expression of "a relationship of mutual loyalty and faithfulness" between the parties bound by a covenant (Lucas, 237). Daniel affirms that God has fulfilled his covenantal obligations. But Yahweh's *ḥesed* or covenantal love is contingent on Israel's loving obedience in response to his commands (Heb. *miṣwôt*), since they express his will for his people. The

final clause of **v.4b** echoes the Decalogue, in which Yahweh promises to show "*love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments*" (**Ex 20:6; Dt 5:10**). The context both in the Pentateuch and Daniel's prayer "makes clear that what is called for is not so much an emotional as a moral commitment" (Lucas, 237).

John Goldingay: This prayer begins with an ascription of praise to God (**v. 4**), a motif that recurs in the body of the prayer (e.g., **vv. 7a, 9a, 15**). The recognition that **right is on Yahweh's side** is of key importance to the prayer, which in this connection can be described as a *Gerichtsdoxologie*, an act of praise at the justice of God's judgment. The central feature of the prayer is thus an **acknowledgment of wrongdoing** (**vv. 5–14**). It makes a statement in general terms of what Israel did and failed to do (**vv. 5–6, 9b–11a, 11b, 13b, 14b**) and of God's acts in response (esp. **vv. 11b, 12–13a, 14**), and it contrasts the consequent moral positions of God and people (esp. **vv. 7–8a**). It incorporates some description of the afflicted state of the people for whom Daniel prays; the description corresponds to the lament in a protest psalm. This second section of the prayer is the longest, yet it does not express its main aim. The prayer is not just an acknowledgment of wrongdoing and acceptance of responsibility for it, like **Josh 7:20–21; 2 Sam 12:13a;** and the Deuteronomistic History as a whole. The acknowledgment of being in the wrong is designed to open the way to a **plea for mercy**, as in **Judg 10:15; 1 Sam 15:24–25; Ps 106;17** contrast—among the communal prayers of confession—**Ezra 9**. Thus the third element in the prayer's form is a plea for God to turn back to his people in forgiveness and restoration (**vv. 15–19**). The transition to the plea is marked by the emphatic particle "*but now*," which recurs in **v. 17**: for the repetition, compare **2 Sam 7; 1 Kgs 8**. It is both a conjunction and an interjection; it expresses an outburst of emotion. The plea is dominated by motive clauses and phrases that indicate the reasons why God should forgive and restore **(vv. 15a, 16a** [two phrases], **16b, 17b, 18a, 18b, 19b**).

B. (:5-14) <u>Confession of Sin</u> – Surrendering to the Righteousness of God and Soliciting the Mercy of God

1. (:**5-6**) Aspects of Israel's Iniquity Confessed

a. "*we have sinned,*" [not "**they** have sinned"]

Stephen Miller: The Hebrew verb *ḥāṭā'* ("*sinned*") basically means "to miss the mark." For example, **Judg 20:16** says that there were seven hundred Benjamite soldiers who "*could sling a stone at a hair and not miss* [*ḥāṭā'*]" the target. Ethically speaking, sin is missing God's mark or goal of holy living that is required for human beings. Israel as a nation had fallen short of God's design to be a holy people.

John Goldingay: does not imply that people had been seeking to live in accordance with God's expectations but had not managed to achieve what they were aiming at. It implies that their **failure was willful**.

b. "*committed iniquity,*"

Stephen Miller: Hebrew *ʿāwâ* ("*done wrong*," NIV, NRSV; "*committed iniquity*," NASB, KJV) seems to be derived from a root that means to "*bend or twist*." It appears to emphasize the fact that sin is "something twisted or perverted" or that one who sins has veered from the straight and narrow road and "made his paths crooked." Words that express righteousness in the Old Testament generally have the primary meaning of "straightness"; thus to make one's paths crooked is sin. This veering from God's prescribed path is condemned because it is deliberate.

c. "*acted wickedly,*"

d. "*and rebelled,*"

Paul Lederach: Twice Daniel confesses the evil of acting wickedly (*raša*ʿ **9:5, 15c**). The word signifies the opposite of doing good; in the Psalms it frequently describes wrongdoing or acting unjustly. Twice, too, the list includes the evil of rebellion (*marad*) (**9:5, 9**). A classic instance of defying authority is Israel's refusal to move into the land at Kadesh-barnea (**Deut. 1:25-26**). Twice, too, Daniel points to iniquity (ʿ*awon*), essentially perversity and waywardness (**9:13, 16**). There are two references to Israel turning aside (*sur*), stepping off the correct track (**9:5, 11**). . .

Thus Daniel catalogs evil and gathers together all sin, every kind, to its full extent. In light of Israel's sinfulness resulting in captivity, and in memory of Solomon's prayer, Daniel's prayer of confession and repentance indicates that he takes Scripture seriously.

e. "*even turning aside from Thy commandments and ordinances.*"

f. "*Moreover, we have not listened to Thy servants the prophets, who spoke in Thy name to our kings, our princes, our fathers, and all the people of the land.*"

John Whitcomb: Jeremiah had been beaten and thrown into prison. The people got exactly what they deserved.

2. (:**7-10**) Surrendering to the Righteousness of God

a. (:**7-8**) Deserving of Open Shame

"*Righteousness belongs to Thee, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day-- to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which Thou hast driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against Thee. 8 Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee.*"

Stephen Miller: Daniel contrasted the **righteousness** of the Lord with the **unfaithfulness** of Israel. The contrast between Yahweh and Israel is emphatic in the

Hebrew, which reads, "*To you, O Lord, is the righteousness, but to us is shame of face.*" That Yahweh was punishing Israel for their unfaithfulness to him was evident to all who observed the nation's present deplorable condition. Israel's shame was a result of their sins. This "shame" was the disgrace of the captivity and the destruction of the land of Israel.

b. (:**9-10**) Desirous of Compassion and Forgiveness

"*To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; 10 nor have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets.*"

Paul Lederach: Early in the prayer, Daniel acknowledges that God is **forgiving**; at the end of the prayer, he appeals for God to exercise that forgiveness toward his people.

Tremper Longman III: The prophets were sent, according to Daniel, to all strata of society—from kings to common people. None of them, however, responded. Rather, they persisted in their foolish and dangerous rebellion. . .

Between the Law of Moses and the Prophets, God's people had **no excuse**. They knew what the consequences of their actions would be. But somehow they rationalized it. Perhaps they grew presumptuous because of God's long patience with them. They would sin without immediate punishment, so they began to doubt that God would really follow through with his threats. **Jeremiah 7:1–29**, the so-called "temple sermon" of Jeremiah, charges Israel with presumption because of the presence of the temple in the city. They wrongly reasoned that if God's residence was the temple, there would be no way that an enemy, even one as mighty as Babylon, could defeat their city. They were safe as long as God lived in Jerusalem, and since the temple was immovable, they were safe forever.

What they did not consider was the possibility that God would abandon his temple (**Ezek. 9–11**). They further did not reckon with the possibility God himself would turn against them and lead the Babylonian army into the streets of Jerusalem (**Jer. 21:3–7**). Indeed, the horror of the resulting destruction of Jerusalem reverberates through the biblical literature of the exilic period, as seen in **Lamentations 2:2–5**.

3. (:**11-14**) Soliciting the Mercy of God

a. (:**11**) Deserving of God's Curse –
This Curse Has Been Poured Out

"*Indeed all Israel has transgressed Thy law and turned aside, not obeying Thy voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him.*"

b. (:**12-14**) Deserving of God's Calamitous Judgment –
This Calamity Has Been Brought upon Us

1) (:**12**) Uniqueness of Israel's Calamity

"*Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem.*"

Stephen Miller: Daniel's statement regarding the **uniqueness** of Jerusalem's destruction strikes us as surprising. Certainly other nations had gone into captivity, and other cities and temples had been destroyed. Other nations had experienced defeat and deportation, but their gods were idols of lifeless wood, stone, and metal (cf. **Ps 135:15–17; Isa 44:9ff.**). Now the people of the true God were in exile, and his city and temple were in ruins. Truly nothing like this had ever happened in history.

Andrew Hill: Daniel's prayer moves from communal confession to theological reflection on God's justice (**vv.11b–14**). The "*curses and sworn judgments*" (**v.11b**) are the covenantal curses recorded in **Leviticus 26:27–45** and **Deuteronomy 28:15–68**. . .

Surely other cities and temples had been razed and other nations had been taken into exile, but "the destruction of Jerusalem was in a category apart from the destruction of any other city because in no other had the Lord deigned to dwell" (Baldwin, 166).

2) (:**13**) Stubbornness Despite Clear Warnings

"*As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Thy truth.*"

3) (:**14**) Justification for Divine Punishment

"*Therefore, the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice.*"

C. (:15-19) <u>Petition for Deliverance</u>

1. (:**15**) Appealing to God's Redemptive Power

"*And now, O Lord our God, who hast brought Thy people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and hast made a name for Thyself, as it is this day-- we have sinned, we have been wicked.*"

Andrew Hill: The adverb "*now*" (Heb. *ʿattâ*) marks the transition from confession to supplication or petition in Daniel's prayer (**v.15**).

Stephen Miller: Daniel began his petition by calling on the Lord as the God of the exodus from Egypt (cf. **Josh 24:17**). The reference to the exodus apparently was intended to call attention to Yahweh's role as the covenant-keeping God who delivered

Israel from Egypt in order to fulfill his covenant promises to Abraham and to establish his reputation ("*name*") among the nations. Now in spite of Israel's sin the prophet was pleading with God to remember these promises and reestablish the nation of Israel.

Paul Lederach: Daniel returns to God's acts in the Exodus. The deliverance from Egypt was one of the great events in forming Israel's faith. References to the Exodus are made to emphasize God's grace and to encourage obedient response to this gracious act (cf. **Exod. 20:2; Deut. 6:21-25**). Here it provides the backdrop for confession of sin and a plea for mercy. . .

Daniel's reference to the Exodus also suggests that the present calamity is so great that another act of salvation in the magnitude of the Exodus is necessary, a similar manifestation of God's mighty hand (**9:15, 19**). As the Lord glorified himself in rescuing his people from Egypt, so now God should act, for your own sake, O Lord (**9:17, 19**).

2. (:**16**) Appealing to God's Mercy and Righteousness

> "*O Lord, in accordance with all Thy righteous acts, let now Thine anger and Thy wrath turn away from Thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Thy people have become a reproach to all those around us.*"

Stephen Miller: In **vv. 16–19** the prophet reached the crux of the prayer. **Verse 16** declares that the basis of Daniel's plea was the righteousness of God ("*in keeping with all your righteous acts*"). "Righteous acts" here refer to Yahweh's "*just actions*." The point is that **justice had been served**. Israel had been punished for their sins, and now it would be right ("*just*") for God to restore the nation (cf. **Isa 40:2; Lev 26:41**).

3. (:**17**) Appealing to God's Covenant Commitment

> "*So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Thy servant and to his supplications, and for Thy sake, O Lord, let Thy face shine on Thy desolate sanctuary.*"

4. (:**18**) Appealing to God's Great Compassion

> "*O my God, incline Thine ear and hear! Open Thine eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Thy name; for we are not presenting our supplications before Thee on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Thy great compassion.*"

John Goldingay: The **concrete descriptions** of this trouble are twofold.

First, it involved the **desolation** of city and sanctuary (**vv. 17, 18**). Desolation suggests the wasting of a place, the devastation and ruin of what is built and the consequent emptying of what is inhabited. That a place should be wasted is a standard threat (**Lev 26:22, 31–43; Jer 4:27; Amos 7:9**); that the land has been wasted is a standard element in the depiction of Judah's position (**Isa 59:8, 19; Ezek 36:34–36; Zech 7:14; Lam**

1:4, 13, 16; 5:18; 2 Chr 36:21) and of the Antiochene period (1 Macc 1:38–39; 3:45; 4:38).

Second, "*trouble*" took the form of **banishment** (**v. 7**) from Judah and Jerusalem to countries near and far away. That phrase is characteristic of Jeremianic prose. There is a pathos about the phrase "*all the countries where you have driven them*"; it features prominently in promises that Yahweh will restore the people even from all these countries (**Jer 16:15; 23:3, 8; 29:14; 32:37; 46:27**; also **Deut 31:1**, where in this context the exiles are coming to their senses).

5. (:**19**) Appealing to God's Honor and Reputation

> **"***O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Thine own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name.*"

John Whitcomb: Making reference to the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant.

Stephen Miller: In **v. 19** the prayer reaches a passionate crescendo as the prophet concludes with short staccatolike sentences reflecting the emotion that filled his heart. God is addressed "*O Lord*" three times in this verse, emphasizing his sovereign power and ability to answer this prayer.

Daniel pleaded with the Lord to "*listen*," "*forgive*," "*hear*," and "*act.*" God was being entreated to direct his attention to the Jews' situation and to do something about it. Quick action was requested ("*do not delay*") because the Lord's own reputation was at stake. Each day that Jerusalem lay in ruins and the Jewish people were in exile brought more shame to Israel's God. Therefore Daniel reminded him again that "*your city and your people bear your Name*."

Paul Lederach: There is hardly another prayer in the Scripture so **urgent**. God is called upon to relieve Daniel's people burdened by sin and afflicted by merciless oppression. God is to act without delay—for his own sake (**9:17, 19**), to bring salvation to the city and to his people, who bear your name.

To *act for your own sake* suggests that since God has punished his disobedient people, thus showing to the whole world his righteousness and justice, he should now reveal to the world his steadfast love (**9:4**), mercy, and forgiveness (**9:9**) by restoring his people. In acts of restoration, God would reveal himself more fully. For Daniel, the present crisis is a discredit to those who bear God's name. The present crisis is also a discredit to God's own name. Thus Daniel prays that God would restore his people and his city, for your own sake (cf. **Ezek. 20:9, 14, 22; 36:20-22**).

II. (:20-27) GABRIEL EXPLAINS PROPHECY OF SEVENTY-SEVENS

A. (:20-23) Mediator of the Prophecy Relating to Jerusalem and the Temple

1. (:**20-21**) Appearance of the Angel Gabriel

a. (:**20**) Context of Confession of Sin and Petition for Deliverance

"*Now while I was speaking and praying,*
and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel,
and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God
in behalf of the holy mountain of my God,"

John Whitcomb: praying not for all the world; not for Gentiles; but for the Jews and the people of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

b. (:**21**) Contact Initiated again by Gabriel

"*while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel,*
whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my
extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering."

Stephen Miller: Gabriel is called a "*man*" because he appeared in human form. Daniel pointed out that this was the same angel who had visited him in his "*earlier vision*" (cf. **8:15–16**). Apparently Gabriel was the **chief angel for divine communication**. He seems also to have appeared in bodily form to Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist (**Luke 1:19**), and to Mary (**Luke 1:26–27**).

2. (:**22-23**) Assignment Given to Gabriel

a. (:**22**) Provide Insight and Understanding to Daniel

"*And he gave me instruction and talked with me, and said,*
'O Daniel, I have now come forth
to give you insight with understanding.'"

b. (:**23**) Promote Reception of God's Privileged Prophecy to His Beloved Servant

"*At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued,*
and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed;
so give heed to the message
and gain understanding of the vision."

John Whitcomb: Daniel greatly beloved by God for his commitment and love and obedience. We should long to be like Daniel.

Iain Duguid: Daniel was praying for the fulfillment of these promises of the transformation of the people of God. He longed to see them changed from sinners to a holy people with God dwelling in their midst, and to see **Jerusalem restored** through the coming of the **messianic king**. In Daniel's day, the covenant relationship between God and his people had been broken by the sin and transgression of Israel and Judah. Yet his hope and prayer was that the ending of Jeremiah's seventy-year period of judgment would usher in the time when that prophet's words of restoration of the covenant relationship would be fulfilled. As the people repented, Daniel hoped to see the renewal of God's favor, the rebuilding of the temple, and the ushering in of the promised new covenant which would transform the people from rebellious sinners who

hated God's law and spurned his prophets into a holy people who loved God's law. According to Jeremiah, this change would also be marked by the arrival of the messianic Branch of righteousness, whose reign would issue in a state of justice, righteousness, and peace for Judah and Jerusalem (**Jer. 33:15–16**).

Bob Deffinbaugh: **What vision?** What vision was Gabriel's appearance and announcement going to help Daniel to understand? No new vision is given to Daniel in **chapter 9**. Therefore, the vision Gabriel came to further explain and clarify was the vision of **chapter 8**. Daniel told us he did not understand it after Gabriel's first explanation (**8:27**). Now we are told that Gabriel has come to give Daniel insight to understand it. It is therefore now necessary for Daniel to understand the vision which eluded him for 12 years; Gabriel appears a second time to give a more complete explanation of its meaning. . .

We are told three times in **chapter 8**, that the vision pertains to the end times (**8:17, 19, 26**). The return of the captive Jews to their own land was not a part of the events of the end times. The return and restoration of Israel was not the commencement of the kingdom of God. And so Gabriel's announcement to Daniel focuses on the vision of **chapter 8** to show that the events in the near future were not to be viewed as the beginning of the end. . .

Another prince will arise, the counterpart of the Messiah. While the Messiah-Prince is "*cut off*" and His ascent to the throne of the kingdom seems thwarted, the other "*prince*" appears to prevail and to possess the earth and its peoples. The holy city and the sanctuary (the temple) will be destroyed by followers of this "*prince*." The holy place seems to come to an end much like that of the Messiah. Like a flood, the destruction and desolation of the city and the temple come upon it. There is a time of war, and desolation is inevitable.

The "*prince*" then makes a firm covenant with the masses for "*a week*" (or 7 years). This covenant seems to put men at ease and give them a false sense of confidence and security. In the middle of this time period, however, the "*prince*" breaks his covenant, putting a stop to the regular sacrifices and offerings. This prince comes "*on the wing of abominations*" and makes everything he comes into contact with desolate. He will bring about destruction. This destruction comes about by divine permission because it is a part of the divine plan.

In the fewest words possible, Daniel speaks of the sudden destruction of this evil prince. It is a destruction that has been divinely decreed. It is a complete destruction. The "*one who makes desolate*" is suddenly destroyed. . .

What Gabriel has to say in these few verses is not really new. It is but a further explanation of the vision Daniel received in **chapter 8**. Both **Daniel 8** and **Daniel 9:24-27** speak of the same events related to the **last days, the end**.

Gabriel is the interpreter in **chapters 8** and **9**. In both chapters, events concerning the end time are described—the same events. The little horn of **chapter 8** is the "*prince*" of **chapter 9**, who concentrates his attention on the "*beautiful land*" of Israel (**8:9**) and who opposes and destroys some of the "*host of heaven*" (**8:10**) and the "*holy people*" (**8:24; 9:24**). He is the one who opposes even the Messiah, the Prince of princes, and by means of whom the Messiah is "*cut off*" (**8:25; 9:25-26**). He is also the one who "*removes the regular sacrifice*" (**8:12**), who puts a stop to "*sacrifice and grain offering*" (**9:27**). In the end, he is "*broken without human agency*" (**8:25**), as this one who makes desolate is suddenly and completely destroyed (**9:27**)

The end times and the coming of God's eternal kingdom were not imminent for Daniel or his fellow-Israelites. Certain necessary events had to precede the coming of the kingdom, and these things were not to take place for many years. Sin had to be atoned for and put away. Righteousness had to be provided for those who would enter into God's kingdom. This was to happen many years in the future through the substitutionary death of the Messiah, who would bear our sins on the cross of Calvary. In order for the Messiah to die, He would have to be opposed and even appear to have lost the struggle. Only after this preparatory work could God's kingdom come to the earth for His people.

In addition to this, God's purpose of bringing the good news of salvation to the Gentiles would have to be fulfilled. During the past 2,000 years, the gospel has been proclaimed, and many Gentiles have come to faith in Jesus as the Savior. Soon, when those Gentiles whom God has chosen have been saved, the times of the Gentiles will end, and the events of the last days will commence, leading up to the defeat of God's foes and the establishment of His eternal kingdom.

B. (:24-27) Substance of the Prophecy

1. (:**24**) General Parameters of the Prophecy

a. Period of Time in View

"*Seventy weeks have been decreed*"

Stephen Miller: "*Sevens*" (traditionally "weeks") is a literal translation of the Hebrew and refers to periods of seven without specifying what the **units** are. These may be sevens of years, days, months, or indefinite periods of time. Sevens of days or months would not meet the requirements of the text in any sense. As previously noted, some scholars consider the sevens to be indefinite time periods, but most hold that they refer to periods of seven years each.

First, years fit the context well.

Second, the Hebrews were familiar with the concept of sevens of years as well as of days because the Sabbatical Year was based on this premise. Every seventh year there was to be a sabbath of rest for the land (cf. **Lev 25:1–7**). God promised that if Israel did not keep these sabbath years, they would be driven from the land and scattered among the nations (cf. **Lev 26:33–35**; cf. **Jer 34:12–22**). According to **2 Chr 36:21**, one result

of the seventy-year Babylonian captivity was that the land was allowed to rest in order to make up for the sabbath years, which the Jews had failed to keep. Therefore in Scripture only two types of weeks or sevens are mentioned—sevens of days and sevens of years. All agree that days is not a valid option in this context; only sevens of years remain. The burden of proof rests squarely upon anyone who would take the sevens in any other sense.

Third, those who contend that the sevens are symbolic must account for the fact that **specific numbers** are used and for division of the seventy sevens into units of seven, sixty-two, and one. Why would such definite numbers be employed to represent periods of indefinite length?

Fourth, if the numbers are symbolic, they should at least be proportionate to the length of the period represented. Montgomery rightly insists, "The denomination must remain the same: 'week' cannot be a variable quantity, as now a septennium and now some other quantity of time." Yet this is not the case with the symbolic views as has been noted.

Fifth, if the seventieth seven is the future tribulation (as this commentator holds), there is evidence in other Scriptures that the duration of that period will be seven literal years.

Therefore "*seven*" is best interpreted to represent seven years, and "seventy sevens" would equal **490 years**. Daniel was told that these "seventy sevens" had been "*decreed*." The verb translated "*decreed*" (*ḥātak*) occurs only here in the Old Testament but is used in later Hebrew and Aramaic to mean "cut, cut off, decide." This meaning fits the context well. God had "cut off" or "cut out" a certain period of time (490 years) from the remainder of history for a specific purpose.

J. Sidlow Baxter: And now, what kind of *years* are we to reckon? We are not left in doubt. The interrelation of Daniel's visions and those of John is patent to all; and a comparison of the two will settle it that the prophetic year is a lunisolar year of **360 days.** Both Daniel and John speak of "*a time, and times, and half a time*" (that is three and a half "*times*"); and both make it clear that three and a half "*times*" are three and a half *years* (Compare **Dan. vii. 25; ix. 27; Rev. xii. 14; xiii. 5**). But John goes further and splits up the three and a half years into *days* (compare **Rev. xi. 2, 3; xii. 6, 14**), showing us that the three and a half years equal 1,260 days. This settles it that the prophetic year is one of 360 days.

b. People and Place Targeted = Israel and Jerusalem
"*for your people and your holy city,*"

Stephen Miller: Gabriel told Daniel that this time had been set apart "*for your people and your holy city*." The identification of the people and the city are clear from the context. Daniel's people were the Jews, and his holy city was Jerusalem. Some scholars (e.g., Young, Keil, Leupold) **symbolize** "your people" to refer to "spiritual Israel," the church, and the "holy city" to mean the heavenly Jerusalem. Yet such a view is not

supported by the text. Gabriel's words in **vv. 24–27** contain specific references to Israel, the temple, and the city of Jerusalem. Moreover, this revelation was an answer to Daniel's prayer, which concerned the Jewish people. For these reasons the majority of scholars rightly understand this prophecy to refer to the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

c. Purposes Decreed – Descriptions of Coming Millennial Kingdom

Andrew Hill: Baldwin, 168, has observed that the six verbs divide neatly into two sets of three: the first three address (**negatively**) the grounds on which God forgives human sin (in response to Daniel's prayer), and the second three focus (**positively**) on the fulfillment of God's righteous purposes in human history.

1) Grounds for Forgiveness of Sin

"*to finish the transgression,*
to make an end of sin,
to make atonement for iniquity,"

S. Lewis Johnson: "*to finish the transgression*" -- What he means is that at the end of the 490-year period of time, Israel's rebellion will be finished. . .

"*to make atonement for iniquity*" -- The application of the cross to Israel awaits the future. It's the event spoken of in the Bible, "*When they shall look upon him whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only son*." And therefore 13th chapter of the book of Zechariah, just after saying that the text reads, "*In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and impurity*." Well that fountain was opened 2000 years before the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it's in the future that they see the fountain that has already been opened. So, when he says to make atonement, he is talking about **the application of the atonement to the nation Israel**.

Stephen Miller: In the Hebrew "*transgression*" (*peša*ʿ) is definite, which may indicate that a particular "*transgression*" was intended. If so, it probably would refer to **Israel's rebellion against God**. It occurs elsewhere in Daniel only in **8:12–13**, but the semantically related verb *ʾābar* ("*transgress*") occurs in **9:11**.

2) Fulfillment of God's Righteous Purposes in Redemptive History

"*to bring in everlasting righteousness,*
to seal up vision and prophecy,
and to anoint the most holy place."

S. Lewis Johnson: The fourth thing, *to bring in everlasting righteousness*. Now our millennialists have a great deal of problem with this because it's very difficult for them to explain this period of time now as a result of our Lord's First Advent being a period of everlasting righteousness, and rightly so because it does not refer to the present

period, **it refers to the future** to bring in everlasting righteousness is a reference to the coming of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus which he will bring at his Second Advent. In **Jeremiah chapter 31, verse 33-40**, is the explanation of the details of it.

Stephen Miller: "*To seal up vision and prophecy*" may be interpreted in two ways. Hebrew *ḥātam* means to "*seal, affix seal, seal up*." "*To seal*" may refer to the closing up of a document, for in ancient times a scroll was rolled up and sealed shut for preservation (cf. **Jer 32:10ff.; Dan 8:26; 12:4, 9**). A seal was additionally employed as a mark of authentication by a king or other official (cf. **1 Kgs 21:8; Esth 3:12; Dan 6:17[18]**).

In the first case "*to seal up vision and prophecy*" would signify that these forms of revelation would be closed, and in the second the idea would be that God will someday set his seal of authentication upon every truly God-given revelation ("*vision and prophecy*") by bringing about its complete fulfillment. The result would be the same in either case. Whitcomb observes: "Since Christ, in all His glory, will be present with His people, there will be no further need for visions and prophecies." "*To seal up vision and prophecy*" must include revelation concerning both Christ's first and second advents. Therefore **this promise cannot be fulfilled until the end of the age.**

Stephen Miller: The phrase "*the most holy*" (lit., "*holy of holies*") almost certainly refers to "*a most holy place*" (NRSV), as Keil recognizes. . . Archer interprets this "*most holy place*" to be a **literal, future temple**. If a future temple is intended, which seems the best view, then it would be the edifice described in **Ezek 40–48**. Daniel would have assumed that his readers were familiar with the prophecy of their contemporary, Ezekiel. This temple will be built and consecrated for service at the onset of the millennium.

S. Lewis Johnson: In other words, the temple that is rebuilt will be anointed as the central place for the worship of the Lord throughout the period of the kingdom age. Thus right here in the beginning now of the prophecy of the seventy sevens, we are told that there are 490 years severed off of the times of the Gentiles**, six great things** will take place as a result of that **490 year period of time**. Then of course, the Lord Jesus will come and establish his kingdom upon the earth. . . Now we shall see in our next study that this 490-year period of time is divided up into three sections, seven weeks, sixty two weeks, and then one week. Or 49 years, 434 years and seven years. . .

At the end of 490 years, Israel is going to have all of these blessings. Well, he would ask. First of all, when do the 490 years begin? When do they end? And are the 490 years consecutive years? Or is there perhaps a gap within them? These are the questions that would surely come to the prophet's mind.

John Whitcomb: The temple will become the focus of worship and instruction in God's law throughout the 1,000 year Millennial Kingdom.

2. (:**25**) Initial Period of 69 Sevens (483 Years)

a. Starting Point

"*So you are to know and discern that*
from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem"

b. Ending Point

"*until Messiah the Prince*"

c. Duration

"*there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;*"

d. Characterization of the Rebuilding Project

"*it will be built again, with plaza and moat,*
even in times of distress."

John Whitcomb: Context must determine what unit of time is intended by the expression "seventy sevens". Here it must be **years**. What was the starting point? 445 B.C. Cyrus had already given permission for the temple to be rebuilt; but this command was for the city to be rebuilt. Daniel did not live to see this beginning point.

Stephen Miller: The text divides the seventy sevens into three groups. Gabriel states that the first two groups (seven sevens plus sixty-two sevens) will conclude with the coming of "*the Anointed One, the ruler*" (**9:25**). . .

Other scholars have suggested the decree of Artaxerxes I to Ezra (458 B.C.) as the starting point of the seventy sevens (e.g., Archer, Wood, J. B. Payne). This decree permitted Ezra and other Jews to return to Palestine and concerned the establishment and practice of the proper services at the temple (**Ezra 7:11–26**). But again there was no specific command to rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

A second decree of Artaxerxes I issued to Nehemiah (445 B.C.) is a popular view (e.g., Walvoord, Whitcomb, Sir Robert Anderson, Hoehner). Actually, this does not seem to have been a formal decree but involved permission for Nehemiah to visit Palestine (**Neh 2:5–8**). Nevertheless, Artaxerxes' words to Nehemiah probably meet the criteria of the *dābār,* which may mean "*decree, message, or word*." This decree to Nehemiah specifically mentions the **rebuilding of Jerusalem** (**Neh 2:5**), which is the strongest argument in favor of it. . .

Other scholars (e.g., Archer, Wood, Payne) believe that the decree of Artaxerxes I to Ezra in 458 B.C. (or 457) is the beginning point of the seventy sevens. If this view is correct, 483 years after 458 B.C. would result in a date of A.D. 26, the time when many scholars believe Christ was **baptized** and began his public ministry as the Messiah. Jesus' anointing for ministry came at his baptism (cf**. Matt 3:16**); thus he became the "*Anointed One*" at that time, an amazing fulfillment of prophecy.

Ron Daniel: Now we get the **start date** of this time period. It was going to start with the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. When was that decree issued? We know Biblically that this decree was given by King Artaxerxes in **Nehemiah 2:8**. We know historically that he issued the decree on **March 14, 445BC**. . .

The prophecy clearly states that there would be 69 weeks (7 and 62) from the decree until Messiah entered Jerusalem as a ruler.

Zechariah prophesied that it would happen like this:

> **Zech. 9:9** *...Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Did this ever happen? Remember what we have read in the gospels. In the town of Bethany, Jesus sent two disciples to get a donkey and a colt. Jesus then rode into Jerusalem, being hailed as Messiah the Prince.

> **Mark 11:8-10** *And many spread their garments in the road, and others {spread} leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. And those who went before, and those who followed after, were crying out, Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Blessed {is} the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!*

The date was **April 6, 32AD**. Now, this is where the math comes in. As we learned in an earlier study, all Bible prophecy is based on the **360-day year** of the Babylonian calendar. Calculating 69 weeks of years results in 483 years (69x7). 483 years of 360 days results in 173,880 days (483x360). Looking at the calendar, if you started at the day of the decree, March 14, 445BC, and counted off 173,880 days, you arrive at April 6, 32AD, the very day of Jesus' Triumphal Entry!

S. Lewis Johnson: So, notice, the Bible doesn't say much about the **seven weeks**, it just says seven weeks and then sixty and two weeks or 69 and all. I don't know really why that is so, **why the seven weeks are distinguished from the 62**, except to say this, that while it took Nehemiah only 52 days to rebuild the walls of the City of Jerusalem when he got there, it was a remarkable achievement, it must have taken considerably longer period of time to clear up the debris around the City of Jerusalem, which had been gathered, which had gathered there over a lengthy period of time. So, since nothing much is said about it, we will just offer that as a guess that the 49 years was taken to **rebuild the City of Jerusalem and clean it up**. So that was March 5th 444 BC. Now, the 69 weeks then cover a period of time from 444 to March 30, 33 AD.

3. (:**26-27**) Final Events Including the 70th Week (Tribulation Period)
    a. (:**26**) Three Events after the Triumphal Entry of the Messiah

S. Lewis Johnson: Now after this, he says three things are going to happen. Look at **verse 26** carefully. Three things are going to happen then after the sixty-two weeks [in

the time of parenthesis between the 69th and 70th weeks].

J. Sidlow Baxter: As we have said before, the Church of the present dispensation is nowhere the subject of direct prediction in the Old Testament. It was the "secret" kept "hidden" during preceding ages (**Eph. iii**.). Again and again in the Old Testament we find both advents of Christ foretold in the same verse or passage, but with no light given as to the intervening of the present age between them (see **Gen. xlix. 10; Isa. liii. 11, 12; Mic. V. 3; Isa. lxi. 1, 2, with Luke iv. 17-19; Zech. ix. 9, 10; Mal. iii. 1; 1 Pet. i. 10, 11**).

1) Crucifixion of the Messiah
"*Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing,*"

John Whitcomb: Messiah will look like he failed / defeated / crushed. Even his garments were taken from him and they cast lots for him. Where were his disciples? They all fled. He had nothing. The 70th week has not yet begun but the 69 weeks are finished. We are living in the gap. These are people of the fourth kingdom = Rome.

2) Destruction of City of Jerusalem and the Temple
"*and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood;*"

S. Lewis Johnson: Fortunately, from history we know when the destruction of the City of Jerusalem took place. Titus, Vespasian, with four Roman legions came and the City of Jerusalem was destroyed. Incidentally, Titus did not want the temple to be destroyed. But one of the soldiers threw some fire into the temple, caught some of the tapestries, and the result on fire, and the result was that the whole of the temple went up in flames. And the temple was a very, very expensively constructed temple with a lot of gold in it, and consequently when the fire of the temple became very hot the gold began to melt, and it melted and went down in between the stones of the temple according to tradition. And as a result of that, in order to obtain the gold, the soldiers and the others dug up all of the stones of the temple. And you remember, the Lord Jesus had prophesied in **Matthew chapter 24** in the the Olivet Discourse that when the destruction of Jerusalem took place, "*one stone would not be left upon another which would not be thrown down.*"

John Walvoord: The same expression of an overflowing flood is used to denote warlike hosts who annihilate their enemies in **Daniel 11:10, 22, 26, 40** and in **Isaiah 8:8**. This seems to be a general reference to the fact that from the time of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, trouble, war, and desolation will be the normal experience of the people of Israel and will end only at "the consummation" mentioned in **verse 27**, that is, the end of the seventieth seven. History has certainly corroborated this prophecy, for not only was Jerusalem destroyed but the entire civilization of the Jews in Palestine ceased to exist soon after the end of the sixty-ninth seven, and that desolation continued

until recent times. The prophesied events of **verse 26**, like those of **verse 25**, already have been fulfilled and constitute clear evidence of the accuracy of the prophetic word.

3) Desolating Wars until the End of the Age
"*even to the end there will be war;*
desolations are determined."

Stephen Miller: If the sixty-nine sevens (483 years) conclude with Christ's first coming and the final seven (seven years) is terminated by Christ's return, there must be an **interval of time** between the end of the sixty-ninth and the beginning of the seventieth seven. The text also indicates that the seventieth seven would not follow the sixty-ninth immediately. For example, Christ's crucifixion ("*Anointed One ... cut off*," **v. 26**) and the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (**v. 26**) would occur after the sixty-ninth seven, but not during the seventieth seven (**v. 27**), revealing a gap between these sevens. R. Gundry observes: "The possibility of a gap between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth weeks is established by the well-accepted OT phenomenon of prophetic perspective, in which gaps such as that between the first and second advents were not perceived."

Not only are gaps between first and second coming events common, but the two thousand year span (at least) found here may also be explained by the nature of this revelation. God was answering Daniel's prayer, which specifically concerned the future of the nation Israel. Shortly after Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah (after the sixty-nine sevens), Jerusalem was destroyed, the Jewish people were dispersed throughout the earth, and for almost two thousand years Israel as a nation did not exist. Therefore this period was omitted from the prophecy. Israel has now been reestablished as a nation (1948), suggesting that the seventieth seven may soon begin.

b. (:**27**) Description of 70th Week (Tribulation Period)
1) Initiation of the 70th Week = Establishment of a Treaty by the Antichrist
"*And he will make a firm covenant with the many*
for one week,"

John Whitcomb: The little horn coming out of the final ten horns (Daniel 7); Christ said He came and was not received; but Antichrist is coming whom you will receive (**John 5:43**). Israelis are desperate for an impressive political leader to give them credibility on the world scene.

Stephen Miller: Antichrist, on behalf of his empire, will make a treaty with the nation of Israel. This agreement probably entails a promise of protection in return for certain favors (likely including those of an economic nature). It is easy to understand why Israel would enter into such an arrangement with the powerful forces of Antichrist. With such protection Israel will feel safe and secure. The term of the treaty will be "*for one seven*," that is, seven years.

"*In the middle of the seven*" the Antichrist "*will put an end to* [*šābat*] *sacrifice and offering*." This event takes place after three and one-half years. The seventieth seven is commonly referred to as the **tribulation period**, and the second half of this seven is known as the **great tribulation** (**Rev 7:14**; cf. **Matt 24:21**). It is in this last part of the tribulation that the Antichrist persecutes believers and commits other atrocities. The length of the great tribulation, three and one-half years, is spoken of several times in Scripture and should be taken literally (cf. **7:25; Rev 11:2; 12:14; 13:5**). Whitcomb notes: "The clarification provided here is that the three and one-half years of **7:25** follow an initial three-and-one-half-year period at the beginning of which the Antichrist" will make a treaty with Israel. He will break this treaty at the midpoint.

2) Interruption of Worship at the Mid Point of the 7 Years
"*but in the middle of the week*
he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering;"

John Whitcomb: How can these sacrifices (both bloody and unbloody) be terminated if they had not yet started? Presupposes that God will have re-inaugurated the temple under the jurisdiction of the two witnesses. Divine protection until the middle of the 7 years. ("*abomination of desolation*" spoken of in **Matt. 24** – marking the beginning of the great tribulation**)**

3) Destruction Poured Out in the Final Three and a Half Years
"*and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.*"

Stephen Miller: Daniel's message of the seventy sevens is **one of the greatest prophecies in the Bible**. Leupold calls it "the divine program for the ages." Regardless of disagreement over dates and some matters of interpretation, certain facts seem clear. The passage predicts the coming of the Messiah—Jesus of Nazareth. Messiah will die, and subsequently the city of Jerusalem and the temple will be destroyed. At the end of the age an evil ruler will arise who will persecute God's people, but his wicked activities will not continue, for the same Messiah who died will come again. He will judge the Antichrist and all those who follow him. Then the period characterized by the great accomplishments set forth in **v. 24** will ensue. Although this message was first given to the Jewish faithful, all believers will participate in the kingdom of God. Leupold comments that the "glorious victory" of Christ described in this chapter "should be in the forefront of the thinking of God's people."

Remember the timeframe of the **Pre-Wrath Rapture**:

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Why did Daniel fully participate in corporate culpability for the sins of his people?

2) What are some of the grounds for the petitions we make to the Lord (some of the lines of argumentation that we use, etc.)?

3) What is the significance of our living today in that gap period between the 69th and 70th week of this prophecy of end time events?

4) What will make this antichrist attractive to the Jewish people in the last days?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Stephen Miller: **Different Views of the Seventy Sevens** –
4 Representative Views:

1. They are **literal years** extending through the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

2. The "*seventy sevens*" are **symbolic periods** of time ending in the first century A.D.

3. They are **symbolic periods** of time ending at Christ's second coming.

Preferred View:
4. They are **literal years** ending with Christ's second coming. This view agrees with the first that the sevens are literal seven-year periods totaling 490 years. The first seven sevens (forty-nine years) commence with a command to rebuild Jerusalem (either the decree to Ezra in 458 B.C. or the decree to Nehemiah in 445 B.C.) and terminate with the completion of the work of Ezra and Nehemiah about forty-nine years later (either ca. 409 B.C. or ca. 396 B.C.). The next sixty-two sevens (434 years) extend from the end of the first group of sevens to Christ's first coming (either his baptism in A.D. 26 or Christ's presentation of himself to the people as Messiah on Palm Sunday in A.D. 32/33).

After the coming of the Messiah, he was rejected by Israel; and the time of the Gentiles began, which is not counted in the "*seventy sevens*." Just as God focused his attention on the Jewish people for about two thousand years, these past two thousand years his attention has been focused on the Gentiles. However, just as many Gentiles were saved during the Old Testament period, in this present age there are many Jewish believers. At the end of the present age, God will again deal with Israel in a special manner, and the final seven will begin.

During the last seven, which immediately precedes Christ's second advent, there will be a terrible time of **tribulation** for Israel and the world. God will use this trial to bring Israel and countless others to saving faith. At that time the majority of the people in Israel will acknowledge Jesus as the promised Messiah, repent, and be saved (cf. **Rom 11:25–29; Zech 12:10–13:1**). The final seven (seven years) will be terminated by Christ's second coming and the establishment of his earthly kingdom, which will last a thousand years. Christ's reign will, of course, continue beyond the millennium into the eternal state. This last approach seems to be the most exegetically viable alternative.

John Walvoord: This chapter begins with Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years of the desolations of Jerusalem and is advanced by the intercessory prayer of Daniel. The chapter concludes with the third vision of Daniel, given through the agency of the angel Gabriel, which provides one of the most important keys to understanding the Scriptures as a whole. In many respects, this is the high point of the book of Daniel. Although previously Gentile history and prophecy recorded in Daniel was related to the people of Israel, the ninth chapter specifically takes up prophecy as it applies to the chosen people. . .

Several principles emerge from Daniel's reference to Jeremiah's prophecy.

First, Daniel took the seventy years **literally** and believed that there would be literal fulfillment. Even though Daniel was fully acquainted with the symbolic form of revelation which God sometimes used to portray panoramic prophetic events, his interpretation of Jeremiah was literal and he expected God to fulfill His word.

Second, Daniel realized that the Word of God would be fulfilled only on the basis of **prayer**, and this occasioned his fervent plea as recorded in this chapter. On the one

hand, Daniel recognized the certainty of divine purposes and the sovereignty of God which will surely fulfill the prophetic word. On the other hand, he recognized human agency, the necessity of faith and prayer, and the urgency to respond to human responsibility as it relates to the divine program. His custom of praying three times a day with his windows open to Jerusalem still in desolation revealed his own heart for the things of God and his concern for the city of Jerusalem.

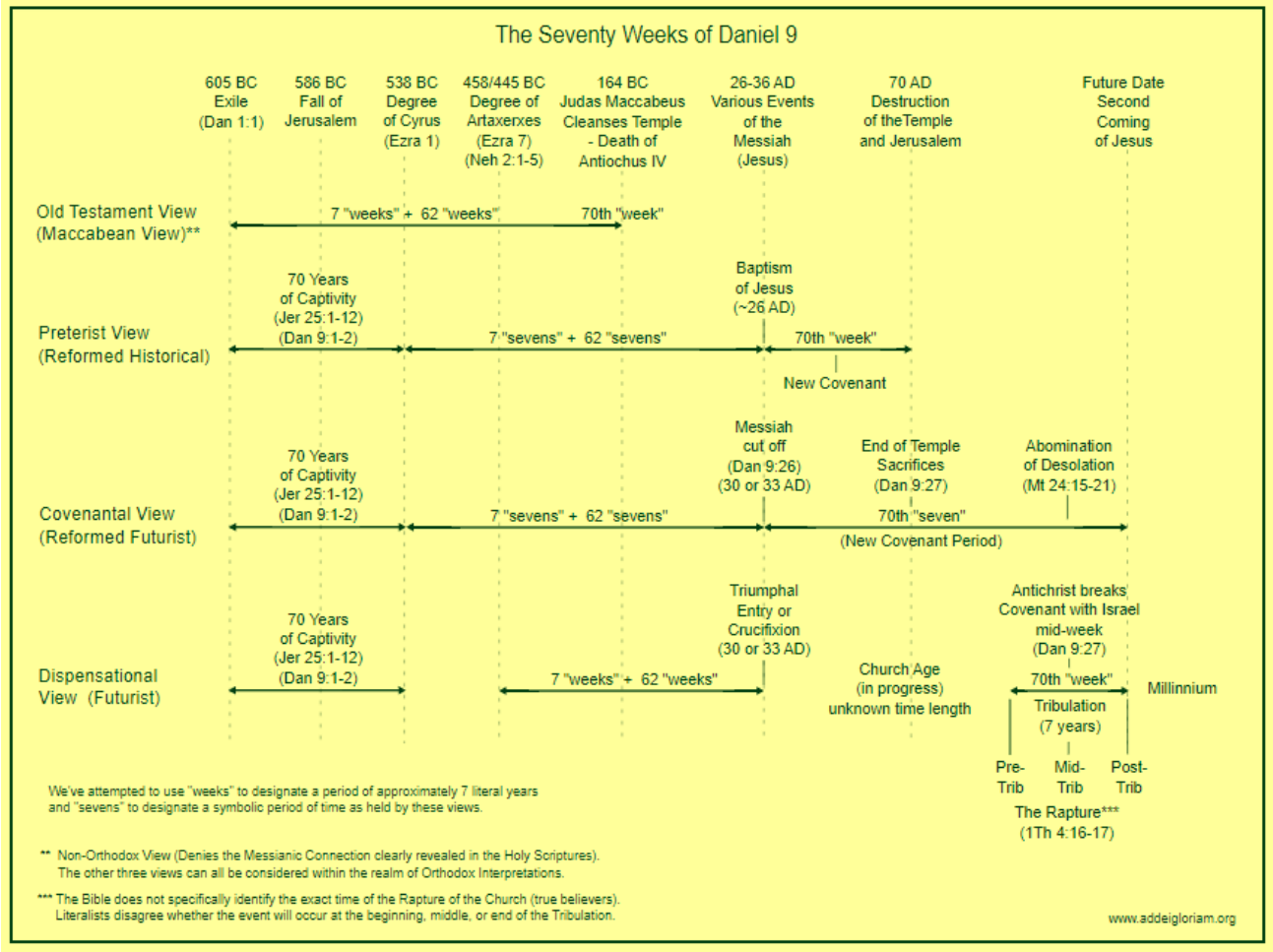
Third, he recognized the need for **confession of sin** as a prelude to restoration. With this rich background of the prophetic program revealed through Jeremiah, Daniel's own prayer life, and his concern for the city of Jerusalem as the religious center of the nation of Israel, Daniel approaches the task of expressing his confession and intercession to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. . .

In summary, it may be concluded that Daniel's great prophecy of the seventy sevens comprehends the total history of Israel from the time of Nehemiah in 445 B.C. until the second coming of Jesus Christ. In the first period of seven sevens, the city and the streets are rebuilt. In the second period of sixty-two sevens which follows, the Messiah appears and is living at the conclusion of the period. In the parenthesis between the sixty-ninth seven and the seventieth seven, at least two major events take place: the cutting off of the Messiah (the death of Christ) and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Actually, the whole present age intervenes.

The final period of seven years begins with the introduction of a covenant relationship between the future "*prince that shall come*" and "*the many*," the people of Israel. This covenant is observed for the first half of the future seven-year period; then the special liberties and protections granted Israel are taken away; and Israel becomes persecuted in their time of great tribulation. The beginning of the last three and one-half years of the seventy sevens of Daniel is marked by the desecration of the future temple, the stopping of the sacrifices, and the desolation of the Jewish religion. It is this period referred to by Christ as the **great tribulation** in **Matthew 24:15-26**.

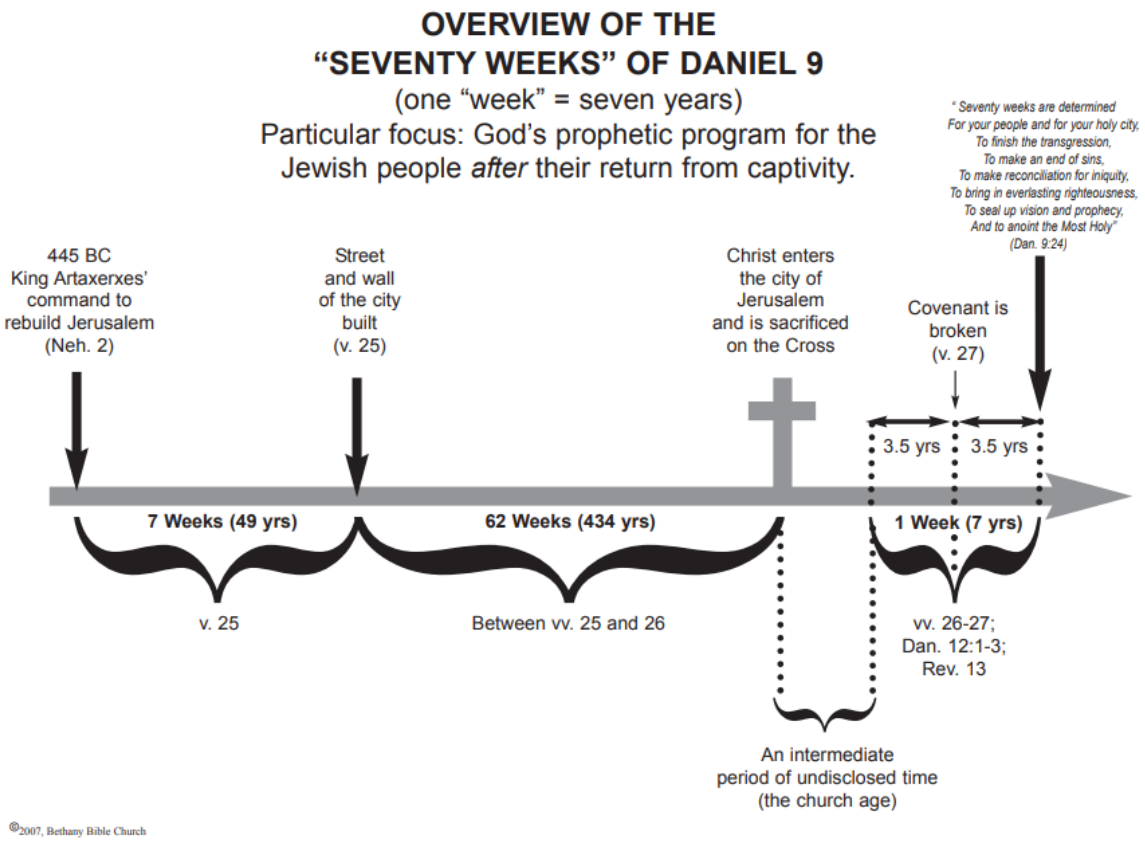
The culmination of the entire prophecy of the seventy weeks is the second advent of Jesus Christ which closes the seventieth seventh of Israel as well as the times of the Gentiles pictured in Daniel's prophecies of the four great world empires. For most of the period, the two great lines of prophecy relating to the Gentiles and Israel run concurrently, and both end with the same major event – the second advent of Jesus Christ, when oppressed Israel is delivered and the oppressor, the Gentile, is judged. With Israel today back in the land, the fulfillment of these prophecies may not be too long distant.

Four Interpretations of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9 Summarized:



https://www.addeigloriam.org/commentary/ot-prophets/seventy-weeks-of-daniel.htm

Greg Allen: **Overview Handout of the 70 Weeks**



Dr. Jerry Harmon: **Example of Effective Prayer**

Introduction: Daniel, as we have studied him, has been to us an example of spiritual excellence in many areas. He is an example of taking a stand and learning to live by conviction. He's an example of how to respond to a crisis in faith. He's an example of how to excel in a world that's a pagan world and yet live for God and be holy. He is an example in many ways to us on how to live a spiritual life. But that is especially true with regard to prayer. As we have gone through this prophecy of Daniel, we have noted in a few places where Daniel has stood out in regard to prayer. For example, in Daniel **chapter 2**, we saw that when Daniel faced a crisis, he went through that crisis by praying. Daniel went through that crisis in Daniel **chapter six** after it's equal law was passed which said basically no praying. Daniel continued to pray just like he always had three times a day. That was his pattern for prayer. And Daniel would rather spend the night in the lions den than to miss a day of prayer. Are your prayers effective? I mean, when you pray, do you have a sense that God hears you and that you're having your prayers answered? That's what we are looking at.

I. Effective Prayer Is Motivated by God's Word

9:2 -- Daniel was studying the biblical writings of the prophet Jeremiah. He learned that the captivity was the last for 70 years and he also knew that it was just about over

Daniel at this time in Daniel chapter 9 is an old man He's 85 to 90 years old.
Cf. **Ezra 9:4-5**

II. Effective Prayer Is According to the Will of God

Daniel understood what the will of the Lord was. Daniel knew that in 70 years, God was going to bring his people back to the land. Why pray if God already said he's going to do it? Why pray if God already made a point to say this is going to happen? Well, this is another point.

Prayer is the Means by which God accomplishes His will.
God knows his plan. And when God reveals his plan to us, he expects us to pray over that plan and to be involved in bringing that plan to pass. Prayer is the tool, is the means by which God accomplishes His will here on earth.

God begins to work on us. God begins to do things in our heart:

1) The Peace of Submission
2) The Joy of Fellowship
3) The Opportunity for Usefulness

III. Effective Prayer Is Characterized by Fervency

Thomas Brooks: "As a painted fire is no fire, a dead man is no man. So cold prayer is no prayer. In a painted fire, there is no heat. In a dead man, there is no life. In a cold prayer, there is no omnipotency, no devotion, no blessing. Cold prayers are as arrows without heads, swords without edges, birds without wings. They pierce not, they cut not, they fly not up to heaven. Cold prayers do always freeze before they get to heaven. Oh, the Christians would chide themselves out of their cold prayers and chide themselves into a better and warmer frame of spirit when they make their supplications to the Lord."

IV. Effective Prayer Is Dependent on God's Righteous Character – 9:4

*I prayed unto the **LORD***. That's in all capitals. And you know what that means? That's the divine name of God. That's the name that the Jews called the unutterable name or the name that they didn't mention. Do you know Jews never mentioned that holy name of God? It's the four letter name called the *Tetragrammaton*, four letters. They just didn't mention it. And the reason they didn't mention it, because that name was too holy to the Jewish person to ever mention. So we're not really sure how to pronounce it. They probably got that tradition from Moses when God revealed himself to Moses God spoke his name, God said who he was, but Moses wouldn't repeat the name back. Instead, he substituted the name **Adonai**. And that was a tradition, I think, that went all the way back to Moses. In other words, it was too great, too holy, even to take upon your lips.

Now listen, whenever a Jew did use that name, it was in a crisis situation. It was in a life or death situation. [Cf. **Ps. 116]** Another reason why a Jew would take upon that name is because it was the covenant name of God. And it reminded God that he was in a covenant relationship with Israel. You are a God who is righteous and you do what

you say. And if you say something will happen, it will happen. Your word is true. You see, prayer is dependent upon the righteous nature, the righteous character of God. In other words, Daniel is saying, God, you always fulfill your promises.

V. Effective Prayer Is Marked by Great Confession – 9:5-19

Daniel spends the bulk of his time confessing his sin and the sin of his nation. Daniel understood the necessity of confession of confession. He was intense. He was detailed. He was sorrowful. He was earnest. He was repetitive. He was thorough and all of his confession.

The New Testament word for confession is a combination of two Greek words, *homo legeo*, which means *homo* is the same *legeo* to say to say the same thing. So when we confess our sins, what are we doing? We are agreeing with God about our sin. We're agreeing with God about who we are. We're agreeing with God about his treatment towards us because we haven't confessed our sins. Confession is basically agreeing with God.

The Elements of Daniel's Confession:

1) Right view of sin – names the different types of sin:
    a. Missed the mark -- the Hebrew word *kada* meaning to miss the mark.
    b. Veered off the path -- we have committed iniquity, *avah*, meaning to bend or to twist or to distort.
    c. Done wickedly -- *rasha*, meaning to act wickedly from within. It speaks about the source of wickedness. It comes from a wicked heart.
    d. Rebelled -- *Morad*, to revolt against someone.
2) Right view of self – **9:7** -- We deserve the shame that we're enduring. That's what confusion of faith means. Literally a shame face. The shame is on us. The shame is because of our sin. Lord, you're righteous. We're wrong. This is a humble confession. Contrast with various excuses we see offered up.
3) Right view of God – **9:9** -- It recognizes God is merciful. Thank God that he doesn't give us what we deserve.
4) Right view of scripture – **9:10-16** - He rehearses the faithfulness and truthfulness of the Word of God.
5) Intercession for others -- Daniel identifies with the people of Israel. And now he is petitioning on behalf of Israel. He's going to God on behalf of other people.
6) Focused on the glory of God – **9:16** -- notice how many times Daniel said, *Lord, for your name's sake* -- he was consumed with the glory of God, the reputation of God

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **The Prophecy of the 70 Weeks**

Introduction: Perhaps the most amazing prophecy in the Old Testament. In fact, some scholars said that These verses, verses 20 down to verse 27, are the single greatest defense of the divine inspiration of the Bible anywhere in Scripture. This is a defense of inspiration. Sir Isaac Newton, who wrote a discourse on this topic, said these verses alone, these prophecies alone, could prove Christianity to be true.

I. The Prayer – 9:20

The vision in chapter 8 revealed that Israel was still going to suffer indignation from God into the future. That's Daniel chapter 8 verse 19. Why this future wrath for Israel? If God was going to bring him out of captivity after 70 years, was not God's wrath over with? Daniel was basically saying, Lord, give me understanding, give me insight. Lord, what's going to happen to our people at the end? Why is there going to be future wrath against Israel?

II. The Prophecy

Gabriel was the angel of communication. He was the one given the job of making great announcements in scripture. He was touched by the angel, but then he was also taught by him. This was the time of the evening sacrifice. Now, obviously, in the city of Babylon, there was no sacrifice going on, literal sacrifice, but it was at a time when sacrifices would normally happen if Daniel could sacrifice. And so that time was set aside for prayer since they could not sacrifice. It was a time of evening prayer that was around three or four in the evening.

And so the angel says in verse 23, therefore, understand the matter. That is, Daniel, pay close attention. Understand this. You're getting a unique privilege here. You're beloved by God, and he is letting you in on this prophetic secret. The word vision, we could translate it appearance. Daniel, take advantage of this appearance, an appearance from an angel.

III. The Period = 70 Weeks = 490 Years

Jewish calendar – 360 days in a year

IV. The People = Jewish nation

V. The Place – 9:24 = Jerusalem

Contrasted with Babylon. The whole course of history is a tale of these two cities. Jerusalem is the city of peace. Babylon is the city of confusion. It was born in confusion. It was a city of man, whereas Jerusalem is the city of God. Babylon began in rebellion against God. Really, it's Satan's city. God's temple is in Jerusalem. Man's tower was being built in Babylon. The Bible compares Jerusalem to a chaste bride, Revelation 21. The Bible compares Babylon to a great harlot, Revelation chapter 17.

VI. The Purpose – 9:24

We're going to see <u>six phrases</u> all of which describe God's sixfold purpose in mind for the Jews in Jerusalem.

A. Finish the transgression

There's going to come a day when Jesus will again will rule with a rod of iron. Every evil transgression will be immediately restrained by his divine power.

B. To make an end of sins

It's a word associated with divine judgment, the idea that in the end of the 70 weeks, God will completely wipe out sin.

C. To make reconciliation for iniquity
It speaks of expiation. It speaks of atonement. And this tells us how God is going to make an end of sin. This tells us how God is going to make an end of transgression. How? It's through the atonement. What atonement? There's only one atonement, and that's the cross of Jesus Christ. And so this speaks specifically about the cross.

Now we get to the positives:
D. To bring in everlasting righteousness
The Jewish people didn't see a distinction between the Messiah's first coming and his second coming. They only saw one coming. But at the end of the coming, there will be a era of righteousness. Now, I'll just tell you this, that there's an interlude, there's a gap between the first coming of Christ and the second coming. We know that, right? That's the mystery that was revealed. It was hidden in the Old Testament, but it's revealed to us in the New. And we're going to look at that as we see these 70 weeks. But we see a hint of that time in the transition between the fourth purpose of God and the three that preceded.

E. To seal up the vision and the prophecy
Now some think this means completion of the New Testament, but that can't be true because Joel 2, 28 and 29 indicates that prophecy and visions will occur at the initiation of the kingdom, which is yet future. And so what he's speaking about here is, let me just quote you, Wickham observed, since Christ in all his glory will be present with his people, there will be no further need for visions and prophecies. So, to seal up visions and prophecies must include revelation concerning Christ's first and second advent. And once he comes in the second time, there'll be no more need for vision and prophecy.

F. To anoint the most holy
I think it's referring to the most holy place, the Holy of Holies, and let me tell you why. The most holy occurs 39 times in the Old Testament. It always has some reference to the Holy of Holies, the tabernacle, the temple. So during this time, this 490 year period, the temple will be rebuilt. In the end, it will be restored. I think, and that's what this is referring to, and it'll be anointed.

VII. The Program
It's broken down into three different segments

- 7 weeks = 49 years
- 62 weeks = 434 years
- 1 week = 7 years

So when does this start? It begins with the command to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Or let's kind of back into it. When did Christ present himself as the Messiah to the nation of Israel? When? Do you know when that was? That was the day when Jesus

rode into Jerusalem, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. On that day, Jesus was presenting himself to the nation as the Messiah. Do you know what day that was? That was on April the 6th. But what year?

Three different starting dates are argued.

1) 536 BC – decree of Cyrus – but this would take us to 53 BC – that doesn't work
2) 458 BC -- First decree of Artaxerxes – Ezra 7:11-26 – that takes you to AD 26 where the only significant event would be the baptism of Jesus – But that wasn't Christ presenting Himself to the nation
3) 445 BC -- 2nd decree of Artaxerxes – Ezra 4; in the month of Nisan in the 20th year of his reign which started in 465 BC; so it would be **March 14, 445 BC**. There was an initial group that went to restore the temple, but they were suspended because the builders were accused of building without authorization. They didn't have a permit.

Now, the first significant period was 49 years = to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Then you tack on the second period, which is 434 years plus the 49 years. And you come up with your 483 years. And remember, on a Jewish calendar, how many days does a year have in it? 360. So, a little bit of math. The total number of days involved is 173,880 days. Count the days = April 6, AD 3, the very day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem and proclaimed himself the Messiah the king.

He completely fulfilled prophecy. He came on time. He died on time. He was buried on time. He rose on time. In fact, I want to tell you something. He's going to come back on time.

There was another thing that was going to happen. Notice in verse 26 -- *and after three score and two weeks, shall Messiah be cut off*. This Hebrew word is used in a literal sense to mean cut, but it's also used in a figurative sense with the idea of eliminating something or destroying something or killing someone. And many times, it's used in light of the execution of a criminal.

"*but not for himself*" -- Jesus didn't die for himself. Who did he die for? The world. He took the sins of the world. Now here's the next thing. *And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary and the end thereof shall be with a flood. And until the end of war, desolations are determined.* Here's what we call the conquest of the city. The temple, the sanctuary, and the city of Jerusalem will both be what? Destroyed. Who are the people of the prince? First of all, who's the prince here? The prince here is speaking of the Antichrist. Who are the people of the prince? Remember, there are four Gentile kingdoms that Daniel noted here. All of these kingdoms had a great impact on Israel, the Babylonian kingdom, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman. But according to the Daniel that we already studied, the Roman Empire will be revived, and he'll lead in the end the Roman Empire. But it was the Roman Empire that will be the people of the prince. 40 years after the Lord was crucified, just 40 years, in AD 70, the Romans came into Jerusalem and they surrounded the city and under the leadership of Titus, they literally destroyed the

temple and the city.

The question is, when does the 70th week start? There's a gap that exists between the 69th week and the final 70th week. Now, the question might come, well, how do you know there's a gap? Because the events referenced have not occurred yet – bringing in everlasting peace, etc. This gap is the mystery spoken of in **Ephes. 3:3-6**. One of these days, the times of the Gentiles will be over, the fullness of the Gentiles will be done, and God will call the clock to begin ticking again. And then the final week, the final 70th week will be fulfilled.

What happens when the final week begins? **Verse 27**. *And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week*. Who is the he there? We're going back to the prince. Who is the prince? Not the Messiah now. This is the Antichrist. The Antichrist will be in charge of the revived Roman Empire, the EU. He will enter into a covenant with Israel. What does Israel want more than anything right now? They want the temple to be rebuilt. They want to restore worship. I believe when the Antichrist comes on the scene, he could very well offer them that. But there's going to be a peace agreement made between the Antichrist, the man who is in charge of the European Union, because of the protection and safety he can offer the nation of Israel, so many hostile people around.

It's going to be a false safety because one day The armies that now occupy the area that we know as Russia will descend to conquer Israel, and they'll call the Antichrist for help, and he will betray them. In the middle of this week, right in the midst of the week, Daniel says, he's going to betray Israel. He's going to cause the sacrifice to cease, and there's going to be all kind of abominations, the overspreading of abominations. The Bible says in Revelation 13, he'll declare himself as God. In 2 Thessalonians 2, the Antichrist will exalt himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped. So that he, as God, sitting in the temple of God, will show himself that he is God. He will say, enough of your worship. If you want to worship someone, you worship me. I'm God. That's what he will do. And this is what the Bible calls the abomination of desolation. And Jesus said in Matthew 24, this final thing and we're done. Jesus said in Matthew 24, listen, if you hear the abomination of desolation spoken of about by Daniel the prophet, He said, listen, you just you just run, flee into the wilderness. Let him who's on the housetop not come down. What do you mean by that? The houses back in this day were so close together that literally if you were on the housetop, that was kind of like a porch back in that day. That's where you would go to relax. You could literally jump from one housetop to another. It was a way of escape. So jump from housetop to housetop and get out of there. If you're on the housetop, don't come down. Get out of there. Escape. Because this is going to be a time of, then will be a time, Jesus said, of great tribulation.

TEXT: Daniel 10:1 – 11:1

TITLE: STAGING THE FINAL VISION

BIG IDEA:
GLORIOUS CHRISTOPHANY AND STRONG ENCOURAGEMENT PREPARE DANIEL FOR THE CONCLUDING VISION THAT REINFORCES GOD'S CONTROL OVER WORLD KINGDOMS

INTRODUCTION:

Iain Duguid: **Daniel 10** is written to help us understand that life is hard and why life is hard, but also to remind us that we are not alone in our struggles. It is part of the larger concluding vision to the Book of Daniel, which runs from the beginning of **Daniel 10** through to the end of the book. Daniel is informed at the outset that this vision concerns **a great conflict** (**Dan. 10:1**). We will see more of the details of that great conflict in **chapter 11**, but **Daniel 10** is also important for preparing us to understand that conflict, especially its spiritual dimensions. In short, it shows us that the conflicts that we experience here on earth are the counterpart of a great spiritual conflict that is presently ongoing in the heavenly realm. An awareness of this great spiritual conflict will help us to be prepared for the challenges of life here on earth, by being clothed in the appropriate spiritual armor.

Tremper Longman III: To know that such a great salvation is coming in spite of the present circumstances cannot help but deeply encourage the godly. The passage continues to function with this intention to those who are living faithfully at a time far removed from that of Daniel. As we will observe, the prophecy continues to veil its revelation. It is more like a provocative glimpse at the future than anything a later reader can use to predict dates or specific events, but it is enough to serve its purpose: comfort and encouragement in spite of present suffering. Once again, therefore, for this entire section the purpose continues to be that of the whole book: **In spite of present appearances, God is in control and will win the victory.**

Paul Lederach: **Chapters 10:1** to **12:13** form a unit, and its structure is complex. There is a long introduction (**10:1—11:1**) leading to the central message of the heavenly being (**11:2—12:4**). In the introduction, Daniel receives word of a coming revelation. A divine messenger appears, before whom Daniel falls prostrate. The heavenly messenger explains that his message relates to the Jewish people in the days to come (**10:12-14**). Daniel falls to the ground once more. A second heavenly messenger touches Daniel's lips, strengthens him, and affirms the dependability of the message.

The heavenly message, extending from **11:2** through **12:4**, spans the historical period from the rise of Alexander the Great to the end of the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (ruling 175-164 B.C.). Kings are not named, yet through a general

knowledge of the history, one can identify kings to the south and west of Palestine and kings to the north and east.

Norman Porteous: It is generally agreed that these chapters belong together as a single whole and tell of a single revelation supposedly made to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus by a heavenly being, who sketches for him in considerable detail the history of the Seleucid period up to and including the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, prefacing it by a very slight account of the Persian period and of the reign of Alexander the Great and following it by a prophecy of the end of Antiochus Epiphanes and of what is to come thereafter.

Andrew Hill: Lucas, 231, designates the literary form of the entire unit as "**epiphany vision**" (in contrast to "symbolic vision")—a helpful expression. He identifies a six-part form for the epiphany vision and notes that it is unique to Daniel in the OT (**chs. 9; 10–12**). The form of the epiphany vision may be outlined as follows (see Lucas, 35):

1. Circumstances (**10:1**)
2. Supplication (**10:2–3**)
3. Appearance of messenger (**10:4–9**)
4. Word of Assurance (**10:10–11:1**)
5. Revelation (**11:2–12:3**)
6. Charge to seer (**12:4**)

Most biblical scholars recognize in the last three chapters of the book a broad, tripartite structure consisting of

- a prologue (**10:1–19**),
- a vision report (**10:20–12:4**), and
- an epilogue (**12:5–13**).

John Walvoord: The entire experience of Daniel in this chapter is on the one hand a reminder of human weakness and insufficiency, and on the other, of divine enablement which will strengthen Daniel for his responsible task of recording this great revelation. The fact that an entire chapter is devoted to this preparation makes clear that the revelation to follow is important in the consummation of God's purposes in the world.

Bob Deffinbaugh: Our text, **Daniel 10:1–11:1**, can thus be outlined

(1) The setting of the vision - **verses 1-3**
(2) Daniel's vision of the Lord - **verses 4-6**
(3) Responses to the vision - **verses 7-9**
(4) The angel's words to Daniel - **verses 10-14**
(5) Daniel's weakness - **verses 15-17**
(6) The angel's ministry - **verses 18–11:1**

(10:1-3) PROLOGUE – BACKGROUND FOR THE CONCLUDING VISION

A. (:1) Significance of the Message

1. Due to Its Critical Timeline and Historical Setting

"*In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia*"

Iain Duguid: In the first year of Cyrus, the first party of Jewish exiles had returned to Jerusalem in response to Cyrus's decree, but they had found life there far from plain sailing. They rebuilt the altar of the temple but almost immediately ran into powerful opposition from their new neighbors on all sides (**Ezra 3:1–6**). This **opposition**, on top of the difficulties of scratching out a basic living in their new home, caused the returned exiles to cease the work on the temple, a hiatus that would continue for more than fifteen years until the time of Haggai and Zechariah. The third year of Cyrus would therefore have been a **time of discouragement** for God's people, both in Judah and in Babylon. The euphoria that surrounded the initial return and the rededication of the altar was fading and the challenges of maintaining faithfulness over the long haul in the midst of great opposition would have been on Daniel's mind.

Tremper Longman III: Cyrus was the Persian emperor who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C., leaving Darius the Mede in charge. This date is surely to be understood as three years after he became king of Babylon, thus inheriting authority over the Jewish population there. The date is probably 536/35 B.C. Already some of God's people have returned home under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel (**Ezra 1–2**). Many, however, decide to stay in exile, including Daniel. We are not given any reasons, but perhaps his advanced age plays into the decision. We know that God has further use for him in Babylon.

In any case, this was the year that Daniel receives his final and climactic vision, described in **Daniel 10–12**. Interestingly, in a parenthetical comment, Daniel's Babylonian name, **Belteshazzar**, is cited. He has not been referred to by this name since **chapter 5**, and here is the only occurrence in the second half of the book. The reasons for this particular use escape us, but certainly it reminds us of Daniel's life in the foreign court. Perhaps it is to remind us that even at the end of his life Daniel is **still in exile.**

2. Due to Its Prophetic Target

"*a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar;*"

3. Due to Its Authenticity and Difficulty

"*and the message was true and one of great conflict,*"

Stephen Miller: Literally the Hebrew text reads simply "*and a great war*" or "*conflict*," with the verb to be supplied. The phrase could refer to a great earthly war (or wars) that would occur in the future, or it could even describe spiritual warfare between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. Both interpretations would suit the context well, for a conflict between spiritual forces is described in **chaps. 10** and **11**, and great wars are

prophesied in **chap. 11**. Probably all the conflicts (or warfare) recorded in these last chapters are involved in the expression, whether conflicts between nations or angels.

John Walvoord: The implication is that the period in view is a long and strenuous one involving great conflict and trouble for the people of God.

4. Due to Its Clarity and Application

"*but he understood the message*
and had an understanding of the vision."

Stephen Miller: This understanding came as an answer to Daniel's prayers (cf. **10:12**). Evidently the prophet was again praying for wisdom concerning the future of his people, the Jews. In the previous three visions God had already revealed much pertaining to Israel's fate, but Daniel desired to know more. By now the Jewish captives had returned to Palestine, but their plight was precarious. Work on the temple was being opposed by the Samaritans, and it is possible that reconstruction had already been halted (cf. **Ezra 4:5, 24**). Archer suggests that this development may have led to Daniel's renewed concern.

Andrew Hill: The opening verse summarizes the contents of the **final vision** (**chs. 10–12**) by introducing the section as a "*revelation*" (**v.1a**), affirming its **reliability** ("*its message [is] true*"; v.1b), summarizing its **content** ("*a great war*"; **v.1c**), and stating the fact that Daniel's understanding of the message "*came to him in a vision*" (**v.1d**). The word for "*revelation*" (Heb. *glh*; GK 1655) means to "uncover" in the sense of revealing a secret (for the complete idiom, cf. NASB's "a message [Heb. *dābār*, "*word*"] was revealed"). The expression serves to summarize the **predictive information** given to Daniel through the heavenly messenger and recorded in **10:20–12:4** (cf. Wood, 265). The form of Daniel's revelation is a "*vision*" (Heb. *mar ʾeh*), in which the "auditive aspect is predominant over the visual element. It is revelation by word instead of picture" (J. A. Naudé, NIDOTTE, 3:1012; cf. "*vision*" [Aram./Heb. *ḥzh*] in the Notes on **7:1–2**). The third-person narration of the introduction calls attention to the **importance** of the revelation to follow (cf. Lucas, 265).

John Goldingay: The opening verse summarizes **chs. 10–12** as a whole by introducing the motifs of the trustworthy revelation that comes to Daniel, the conflicts **ch. 11** describes, and the understanding Daniel then receives.

B. (:2-3) Sober-Minded Preparation

1. (:2) Attitude of Spiritual Focus

"*In those days I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks.*"

Stephen Miller: Years later Nehemiah (**Neh 1:4**) "*mourned*" (same Hebrew word) over the condition of the Jews who had returned to Palestine, and this is evidently what so deeply concerned Daniel here. His mourning involved prayer (cf. **v. 12**) and fasting (cf. **v. 3**; cf. also **Matt 9:14–15**).

"*Three weeks*" is literally "*three sevens of days*." Lacocque correctly remarks, "This preparation lasts '*three weeks of days*'; manifestly the Author added the term '*days*' to prevent confusion with the '*week (of years)*' from **chapter 9**."

John Walvoord: Humanly speaking, there was ground for anxiety. But Daniel did not understand that the seventy years of the captivity which expired with the return of the exiles in **Ezra 1** did not fulfill the seventy years of the desolation of Jerusalem and the temple. This required an additional twenty years (the difference between 605 B.C., the first deportation of the Jews, and 586 B.C., the date of the destruction of Jerusalem). From God's point of view, things were moving exactly on schedule. In a sense, the vision which followed was a reply to Daniel's questions concerning God's purposes for the future of Israel in relation to the Gentiles. These purposes involved a far more extensive program than that fulfilled in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah. While the saints of God may justly be concerned over what seems to be a defeat of God's purpose, the suffering saint should never forget the majesty of the sovereignty of God which ultimately proves "*that all things work together for good to them that love God*" (**Ro 8:28**). From the divine viewpoint, while we should pray, we should be delivered from anxiety – as Paul stated many years later (**Phil 4:6-7**). The period of fasting, however, constituted a divine preparation for the revelation. No doubt, abstinence from all but absolutely necessary food and drink, and the omission of anointing oil – indicative of his grief for the affliction of Israel (**Amos 6:6; 2 Sa 14:2**) – helped to ready Daniel for his great experience.

2. (:3) Abstinence from Distractions

"*I did not eat any tasty food,*
nor did meat or wine enter my mouth,
nor did I use any ointment at all,
until the entire three weeks were completed."

John Whitcomb: cf. **Daniel 1** where Daniel refrained from distractions of Babylonian luxuries and rich food.

Stephen Miller: In Hebrew there is a conjunction between these two clauses that could be rendered "*even*," which would explain that the "*choice food*" omitted from Daniel's diet was "*meat and wine*." Daniel seems to have engaged in a **semifast** rather than refraining from eating all food for this three-week period. He may have existed on bread and water. "*I used no lotions at all*" means that Daniel "neglected the usual niceties of personal grooming, such as fragrant oil on his hair or body." Anointing the body with oil was a common practice among the Jews and other ancient peoples, its purpose being to soothe and refresh the skin and to protect against the heat.

Iain Duguid: Daniel's **solidarity** with his brothers and sisters in the Lord, even at a great distance, should be a challenge to us. The church around the world is one family of God's people. When one suffers, we should all sorrow; when one rejoices, we should all celebrate (see **1 Cor. 12:26**). This obligation requires that we develop an **awareness** of what is happening elsewhere in the world. . .

We should particularly remember the persecuted church. In many parts of the world there are those who suffer severely for their allegiance to Christ. The writer to the Hebrews urges his readers to "*Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering*" **(Heb. 13:3**). Of course, in most cases we cannot write to these people personally, to assure them of our support. Nonetheless, we can do what Daniel did, which is to **fast** for a time from some of the luxuries that are a routine part of our lives, and devote ourselves to praying for these persecuted saints in their time of desperate need. By voluntarily giving up for a period of time some of the joys and pleasures that are so readily available to us, we can identify with those believers who have no prospect of ever experiencing such things. Such an act is also good for us when we are tempted to grumble about the difficulties and challenges of our present situation. It reminds us to be thankful for God's mercies to us in our setting, and to pray for God's people under trials. Abstinence also helps us to keep in mind the fact that this world is not our home. Like the believers under persecution, we too are engaged in a profound spiritual battle against powerful opposition, a battle that rages around us at all times.

Paul Lederach: Daniel senses that the coming message will contain words of trouble for his people. The rituals of fasting and neglecting of bodily grooming were thought to heighten spiritual insight and sensitivity. The thoroughness of Daniel's preparation also lends authority to the revelation, because the one receiving the revelation is personally **fully prepared**. Daniel's earlier search into Scripture became the prelude for a revelation (**9:2**). Here likewise his search after God is preparatory to a divine disclosure (**10:3**).

I. (10:4-9) GLORIOUS CHRISTOPHANY LEAVES DANIEL TREMBLING

A. (:4) Staging for the Vision

1. Date

"*And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month,*"

Andrew Hill: The date formula ("*twenty-fourth day of the first month*"; **v.4**) indicates that Daniel's fast overlaps the feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread (cf. **Lev 23:5**). Lucas, 274, notes that Daniel's self-denial during his fast would have included the festal anointing with oil symbolizing joy and gladness, associated with Hebrew festivals (cf. **Ecc 9:7–8**).

2. Place

"*while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris,*"

Stephen Miller: Daniel was beside the Tigris (Heb. *ḥiddāqel*) in bodily presence, not in vision, when a heavenly being appeared to him. For some reason he was away from Babylon, the capital. Archer thinks Daniel may have been in the area on official business, but since the prophet was involved in an extended period of prayer and fasting, he likely had left the capital in order to spend uninterrupted time with the Lord.

The Tigris River originated several hundred miles to the north of Babylon and flowed through Babylonia to the Persian Gulf, passing within about twenty miles of the capital. Consequently, Daniel may have been as close as twenty miles or as far as several hundred miles from the city of Babylon (although his age probably precluded distant travel).

B. (:5-6) Subject of the Vision = Glorious Preincarnate Christ

1. (:**5**) Expensively Dressed Person

> "*I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz.*"

Andrew Hill: The interjection that follows, "*and behold*" (NASB; Heb. *hinnēh*; omitted from the NIV]) conveys both the unexpected nature of the experience and the excitement it generates (cf. Miller, 280).

Bob Deffinbaugh: Our text reminds us that Christ is the centerpiece of prophecy and the goal of history. Daniel's vision is the concluding vision of the Book, the climax of the prophetic revelation of Daniel. **Daniel's vision is of Christ**. This should come as no surprise, especially for New Testament saints (**Col. 2:16-17**).

Thomas Constable: Expensive linen dress is what the priests in Israel wore, and it distinguished them as God's special servants. Likewise, the sash around this angel's waist, evidently embroidered with or made completely of the best gold, would have identified Him as a **special person**. The meaning of "*Uphaz*" is uncertain. It may be the same as "Ophir," since the translators of the Syriac version of Jeremiah substituted "Ophir" for "Uphaz" in **Jeremiah 10:9**. The location of Ophir is also uncertain. It may have been in southwestern or southeastern Arabia, on the northeast African coast, or in India. [Note: *The New Bible Dictionary*, 1962 ed., s.v. "Ophir," by D. J. Wiseman.] Alternatively, "Uphaz" may be a technical term for "refined gold." [Note: Ibid., s.v. "Uphaz," by D. J. Wiseman.] The personal descriptions of this man resemble what John saw on the island of Patmos, namely: the Son of God (**Revelation 1:13-16**; cf. **Ezekiel 1:13-14**). All these features picture a person of **great glory and splendor.**

2. **(:6)** Exalted Person

> "*His body also was like beryl,*
> *his face had the appearance of lightning,*
> *his eyes were like flaming torches,*
> *his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze,*
> *and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult.*"

Stephen Miller: Some have identified the "*man dressed in linen*" as none other than God himself, probably in the person of the divine **Messiah**. That this person was God seems to be the correct view not only because of the overwhelming effect of his presence on Daniel but because of the similar description of the theophany presented in **Ezek 1:26–28** and the even closer parallel to the portrait of Christ in **Rev 1:12–16**. In

12:6 this "*man in linen*" also seems to have had knowledge that transcended that of the other angels, and in **12:7** he took a divine oath.

An argument commonly raised against the equation of this person with deity is that the angel described in **vv. 10–14** was clearly inferior to God. For example, this angel was "*sent*" to Daniel (**v. 11**) and required Michael's help to fight against other angelic forces (**v. 13**). G. C. Luck offered the proper solution to this problem, which is that the "*man dressed in linen*" and the interpreting angel introduced in **v. 10** are **distinct personalities**. At least four holy angels (the interpreting angel [**10:10–14** and throughout **chaps. 10–12**]; Michael [**10:13, 21**]; and two others [**12:5**]) appear in this vision, and the "*man dressed in linen*" is unquestionably in charge (cf. **12:6–7**). Therefore the personage described in **10:5–6** is a **theophany**, but the contents of the vision are related by the interpreting angel, who is introduced at **v. 10**. In the Book of Revelation there is a similar pattern. On occasions John encountered Christ himself (e.g., **1:12–20**), whereas at other times he was instructed by an angel (e.g., **17:1–6**).

Tremper Longman: I am attracted to Miller's suggestion that the two figures are different, the first being God and the second an angel, but I am also hesitant to be dogmatic about my affirmation of it. After all, there is no clear textual signal that tells us that a second figure has come into play with **verse 10**. It effectively solves a problem, but as such, we should hold it only as a possible hypothesis. In any case, we have a clear case of **spiritual conflict**. On the one side stands God's powerful angelic army and on the other "*the prince of the Persian kingdom*."

John Walvoord: Although there is room for debate even among conservative scholars, the evidence seems more in favor of considering this a **theophany**. In this case, the man of **10:5-6** is to be distinguished from the angel of **10:10-14** as well as Michael mentioned in **10:13.** Although mighty angels are frequently difficult to distinguish from God Himself, as in other visions such as those in Ezekiel and Revelation, the similarity between the man described in **10:5-6** and the glorified Christ in **Revelation 1:13-15** has led conservative expositors such as Young and Keil to consider the man a genuine theophany or an appearance of Christ as the **Angel of Jehovah**.

My Conclusion:

- It seems clear from comparing the parallel vision passages that Christ is the subject here; so we want to interpret the unclear by the clear
- It is possible that another angelic being interacts with Daniel beginning in **vs. 10** as Miller has suggested; but that would be highly unlikely since there is no indication of change in personage
- The objections offered that Christ would not be **sent** and that Christ would not be **hindered** on His mission can be adequately addressed
- No person is better equipped than Christ to provide strengthening and enlightenment
- Daniel's further interaction seems most appropriate if the subject is Christ

C. (:7-9) Severe Reaction to the Vision

1. (:**7a**) Unique Experience of Daniel

"*Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision,*
while the men who were with me did not see the vision;"

2. (:**7b**) Reaction of Terror on the Part of Daniel's Companions

"*nevertheless, a great dread fell on them,*
and they ran away to hide themselves."

Stephen Miller: Paul had a similar experience when he met Christ on the Damascus Road (**Acts 9:1–7**). Only he saw Jesus, but the others with him felt the presence of the Lord and became speechless with fear. [Something supernatural happened to the Apostle Paul here.]

3. (:**8**) Reaction of Being Drained of All Strength

"*So I was left alone and saw this great vision;*
yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength."

Andrew Hill: The "aloneness" of the individual experiencing the vision is not unusual given other revelatory experiences recorded in the OT (e.g., **Ge 15:9–16; 32:24–30**).

4. **(:9)** Reaction of Fainting and Lying Prostrate on the Ground

"*But I heard the sound of his words;*
and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground."

Stephen Miller: Daniel's severe reaction to the presence of this person confirms that this being was no mere angel.

John Goldingay: We are then told successively how he was touched and raised to his hands and knees and then to a standing but bowed position, then touched and enabled to voice his weakness, then touched and encouraged to listen to the messenger.

John Whitcomb: From time to time the Lord Jesus in His public ministry had spectacular signs to indicate that God the Father was talking to Him in remarkable and special way. Example: **John 12:27ff**. Watch what happened -- look at the reaction of the multitude – a spectacular supernatural endorsement (confirmation) of the enormous significance of the things that were being said by the Father to the Lord Jesus.

II. (10:10-14) CONTESTED MISSION OF DIVINE ENCOURAGEMENT

A. (:10-11) The Encouragement Provided by the Angel

1. (:**10**) Touched by the Divine Messenger

"*Then behold, a hand touched me*
and set me trembling on my hands and knees."

2. (:**11**) Testimony to Daniel's Privileged Status

"*And he said to me, 'O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.' And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.*"

Norman Porteous: Once again, as in **9.23**, Daniel is addressed as '*man greatly beloved'*; that is to say, he is favoured by God and chosen to be the recipient of divine revelation. Indeed he is assured that, from the very moment when he began his fast, mortifying or humbling himself and earnestly desiring to understand God's purpose for Israel, there had been a response from God's side. The angel (Gabriel?) had been immediately commissioned to take the revelation to him.

Iain Duguid: God's purpose in revealing himself to Daniel in this glorious manner was not to crush him but to **encourage him**. God wants us to see our own weakness before him so that we will not trust in ourselves but will look to him for our strength. So the awe-inspiring messenger reached out his hand and touched Daniel, speaking encouraging words to him that enabled him to stand, albeit still with trembling: "*A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said, 'Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.' And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling*" (**Dan. 10:10–11**). The angel encouraged Daniel with the affirmation that he was *highly esteemed* by God. Furthermore, the angel had been sent to Daniel in response to his prayers, in order to give him insight and understanding. In other words, the vision that follows in **chapter 11** will be one that is intended to encourage Daniel in response to his mourning and meditation over the present situation in Jerusalem.

John Whitcomb: Christ could be presented as the "**sent One**" – the messenger of God. Does not mean necessarily that this had to be a different angel.

B. (:12-14) The Purpose of the Angel's Visit

1. (:**12**) Sent in Response to Daniel's Petition for Understanding and Deliverance

"*Then he said to me, 'Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words.'*"

John Whitcomb: Look at how the Lord responds to the prayers of His people.

S. Lewis Johnson: There is a story about a man who is sharpening an axe that is a kind of hortatory story and with reference to the prayer life. The perspiring wood chopper who was not doing so well was urged to stop and sharpen his axe. And he snorted in reply, it's tough enough now getting this job done without taking timeout to grind the axe. While there are people who are finding it very difficult to get along in the Christian

life and when it comes to prayer, how often have you ever — have you felt like this? Well, it would be nice to get on our knees and pray, but I really don't have time. Have you ever felt like that?

2. (:**13**) Delayed by Powerful Spiritual Conflict

a. Opposing Demonic Force

"*But the prince of the kingdom of Persia*
was withstanding me for twenty-one days;"

Andrew Hill: Once Daniel is restored to some measure of strength, the angel assures him that his tardiness in coming to Daniel is not due to any reluctance on God's part to respond to fervent prayer (**v.12**).

John Whitcomb: How could Christ have been blocked for 21 days? This is the theme down through the ages. God is never defeated. Problem not solved by substituting another angel here for Christ. He is always winning the war against the demonic forces. God has intentionally limited Himself to what his angels do for Him. He uses angels for assistance as He pleases. Angles have very prominent role throughout scriptures. God does not do everything instantaneously without any delay or hindrance. How could Michael be said to help Jesus? Yet we are called to minister on behalf of Christ.

b. Supporting Help from Michael

"*then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me,*
for I had been left there with the kings of Persia."

Stephen Miller: Evidently the reason that Michael became involved and not another powerful angel was that Daniel was interceding for Israel, a nation especially entrusted to Michael's care (**v. 21**). . . Michael has been assigned by God as Israel's prince (cf. **10:21**); he is "*great*" in power and protects the Jewish people (cf. **12:1**). The implications of these statements are clear. Israel has a mighty angelic supporter in the heavenly realm. Therefore, regardless of Israel's political, military, and economic weaknesses, its existence is assured because no earthly power can resist their great prince. . .

[This opposing angel] is called the "*prince of the Persian kingdom*," so Persia must have been his special area of activity. Therefore this demon was either a powerful angel assigned to Persia by Satan or possibly he was Satan himself. Persia ruled the world in that day, and Satan would surely have concentrated his personal efforts in this most influential area. If the demon was Satan, it would explain why Michael, one of God's most powerful angels, was needed to fight against him. The angelic warfare continued, for **v. 20** reveals that the good angel would return to fight against this demon. Young suggests that it was this evil angel who "influenced the kings of Persia to support the Samaritans against Israel."

In this instance, within the omniscient wisdom of God and the divine plan of God, the delay was permitted. Reasons for this delay are not outlined in the text, but it may be

assumed that God allowed three weeks to pass in order to perform some work in Daniel's spiritual life or for some other unknown purpose. Many times God permits believers to wait for their prayer answers in order to teach them valuable lessons, for example, spiritual commitment, patience, faith. There are also times when God fully intends to respond affirmatively to a request but in his wisdom delays because he knows that the proper time has not yet come.

3. (:**14**) Focused on God's Program for Israel's Ultimate Future

"*Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.*"

Iain Duguid: Nor should we suppose that since Persia and Greece are ancient history, these angels are now resting on their laurels. The satanic forces opposed to the church continue to use the powers and institutions of this world in their struggle against God's people. Throughout history, Satan's enmity against the church will be vented time and again. Time and again, however, though the church is bowed to the ground and may feel abandoned and alone, it is not destroyed because God continues to support and sustain it through the strengthening ministry of his own angels. We are not alone in our conflict, and though the promises of God seem slow in being fulfilled, they are nonetheless sure (**2 Peter 3:8–10**). God's decrees—the edicts that are written in "*the Book of Truth*" (**Dan. 10:21**)—are the ultimate determiner of future realities.

Paul Lederach: The message concerns events to come that will affect the people of God at the **end of days** (**10:14; 2:28**). **End of days** ('*aarit hayyamim*) refers to some time in the future, as in **Numbers 24:14** ("*days to come*"). Similarly, the phrase *time of the end* (**Dan. 8:17; 11:35, 40**) refers to the end of a climactic event or period of time. Neither expression necessarily refers to the ultimate eschatological end of time, yet **12:1-4** may be reaching in that direction.

John Walvoord: The expression *in the latter days* is an important chronological term related to the prophetic program which is unfolded in the book of Daniel. As previously considered in the exposition of **Daniel 2:28**, this phrase is seen to refer to the entire history of Israel beginning as early as the predictions of Jacob who declared to his sons "*that which shall befall you in the last days*" (**Gen 49:1**) and extending and climaxing in the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth. The latter days view the entire history of Israel as culminating in the climax of the second advent and the establishment of the earthly kingdom.

III. (10:15 – 11:1) GOAL OF STRENGTHENING DANIEL TO UNDERSTAND THE REVELATION OF GOD'S TRUTH

A. (:15-17) Expression of Humility and Need for Divine Strengthening

1. (:**15**) Expression of Humility

"*And when he had spoken to me according to these words,*
I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless."

John Whitcomb: OT prophets had to go through agonizing experiences as they served God as His spokesmen.

2. (:**16-17**) Need for Divine Strengthening

"*And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, and said to him who was standing before me, 'O my lord, as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength. 17 For how can such a servant of my lord talk with such as my lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me.'*"

Andrew Hill: Daniel's experience of being touched on the lips calls to mind the throne vision of Isaiah, in which his lips were touched by a live coal from the altar held by an angelic being (**Isa 6:6–7**). Unlike Isaiah's situation, the need here is **strength**, not cleansing.

B. (:18-21) Encouragement Provided to Daniel

1. (:**18-19**) Charge to Be Strong and Brave

a. (:**18**) Touched and Strengthened

"*Then this one with human appearance*
touched me again and strengthened me."

b. (:**19**) Transformed from Weakness to Strength

"*And he said, 'O man of high esteem, do not be afraid.*
Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!'
Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said,
'May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.'"

John Walvoord: The **triple strengthening** of Daniel in this agonizing experience has sometimes been compared to that of the Lord's temptation in the Garden of Gethsemane (**Mt 26:39-44; Mk 14:35-41; Lk 22:39-44**). In both cases, an angel is the source of strength (**Lk 22:43**). This is the last time in this vision where Daniel requires additional strength to be administered by the angel.

John Whitcomb: When God gave Israel the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 through Moses, the people were terrified. *Do not let God speak to us lest we die*. There is value in fearing God as He speaks to us. Be careful as we ask God to speak to us.

2. (:**20-21**) Charge to Receive the Word of Truth

"*Then he said, 'Do you understand why I came to you?*
But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia;
so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.
21 However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth.
Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except
Michael your prince.'"

John Whitcomb: Speaking of **demonic princes** [*prince of Persia; prince of Greece*] under the power of Satan who are assigned to specific countries to try to promote Satan's agenda. You can bet one is assigned to the United States as well.

Andrew Hill: According to Lucas, 277, the rhetorical question has two purposes: first, it reveals that the heavenly messenger is in a hurry to return to the heavenly conflict from which he came, indicating the importance of the message he delivers; and second, it foreshadows the contents of the revelation since the message addresses the time period of the Persian and Greek hegemony over Judah. . .

The heavenly messenger relates that he only reports what is already "*written in the Book of Truth*" ("*the writing of truth*," NASB; **10:21a**). The figurative reference to such a divine scroll "aptly conveys God's control and knowledge of past, present and future" (Baldwin, 182). The "*Book of Truth*" should not be equated with the "*books*" mentioned previously in conjunction with Daniel's vision of the beasts rising out of the sea (see comments on **7:9–10**). Presumably this "*Book of Truth*" contains the course of history for the nations and the Hebrews as God's people, a portion of which is about to be revealed to Daniel.

Bob Deffinbaugh: Here in our text the **curtain is lifted** so that events on earth, which seemed only to have human causes and instrumentality, now appear in relationship to angelic activity. How foolish of mortal men to think their successes are the result only of their own power and mental genius. This is the folly of which Nebuchadnezzar was cured (Daniel 4), one which characterizes all ungodly earthly kings.

The angel informs Daniel of the angelic dimension of political upheaval and turnover. He also informs Daniel his mission is to reveal to him the truth which has already been written. This refers to the decree of God, which is already settled and determined and will not change. . .

Up until now, I have always thought of the angels of God as being the vast majority, with but a handful of rebel angels allied with Satan in opposing God. But this statement makes it seem as though the angel speaking and Michael are taking on angelic powers who seemingly outnumber and outrank them. The angel does not seem to cast any doubt as to the outcome of his struggle, but he in no way minimizes the strength of the opposition.

Norman Porteous: the author wished to suggest that these events were included within the divine providential control of history and were moving towards the divinely planned climax.

C. (11:1) Encouragement Provided by Daniel to Darius the Mede

"*And in the first year of Darius the Mede,*
I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him."

Tremper Longman III: The present chapter division obscures the flow of the section. We have already pointed out that **Daniel 10–12** are a unit. Granted that chapter divisions are necessary for such a long unit, the first one should have come either after **10:19** or after **11:1**, not in its present place. In **10:20** the speech of the "*one like a son of man*" commences. In **10:20–11:1**, the figure, probably an angel, gives a general overview of what is to come before outlining the details (the bulk of **ch. 11**). He is going to tell Daniel "*what is written in the Book of Truth*." Collins is surely right that, from what follows, we are to understand that book as containing **the course of future history as shaped by God**. He is also correct to note that the concept of such a book, followed by a detailed reading of centuries that follow Daniel, has a strong **deterministic** flavor.

John Whitcomb: Preincarnate Jesus still speaking. **1 Thess. 4:16** – at the Rapture of the church the same thing will happen. God has given us some insight in **Daniel 10** into how the moral universe operates and the spiritual forces that are involved in such intense conflict.

* * * * * * * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) How has our Christian culture influenced us to treat God too casually and irreverently?

2) What are some arguments in favor the heavenly being in **vv. 5-6** actually being a Christophany?

3) Why don't we have any focus on the unseen spiritual warfare involving the demonic forces behind our current evil world empires?

4) What made Daniel a beloved (highly esteemed) figure in the eyes of the Lord?

* * * * * * * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Stephen Miller: **Fasting** is a **neglected discipline** for most Christians today, but it was commonly practiced in biblical times. Some have associated fasting with legalism, but only one fast was commanded in the biblical law code. Once a year on the Day of Atonement the people of Israel were to "*deny*" themselves by fasting and mourning over their sins (**Lev 16:29–31**). Even then individuals had to choose to come to Jerusalem and participate in the feast. Other fasts recorded in the Bible were **voluntary**. Through fasting, a person demonstrated sincerity by denying one of humanity's strongest urges, that of satisfying hunger.

Fasting is a **personal matter** between the individual and God. It is voluntary. However, if giants of the faith like Moses, David, Esther, Daniel, Paul, and Jesus himself felt the need to fast, it would seem reasonable that modern saints should be willing to deny themselves in order to pray more earnestly for the furtherance of the kingdom of God in a world that lies in deep spiritual darkness.

Iain Duguid: It is important that we have a proper perspective on the devil's power if we are to stand firm against the devil's schemes. The devil seems to have two basic strategies of operation. The first strategy is the "demon behind every bush syndrome," where he tries to persuade people that he is all-powerful and that to resist him is therefore pointless. The apostle Peter describes him as a roaring lion, going about seeking whom he can devour (**1 Peter 5:8**). Satan pretends to have awesome power and authority. . . Another aspect of this satanic strategy is the tendency in some parts of the church to blame every negative event on the work of demons. . .

Satan's second strategy, though, is the exact opposite of the first. If in his first strategy Satan hides behind a magnifying glass, in his second strategy he shrinks out of sight altogether. This is probably his dominant strategy in our society. It is all too convenient for him when people don't believe in his existence. He can carry out his work unsuspected and undetected. In this strategy, Satan goes around dressed not as a roaring lion but as an angel of light. He enslaves us not by dominant force but by sweet seduction, in the same way a mouse is allured to the trap by a tasty piece of cheese. So too Satan sets his traps around unseen, attractively baited, and we rush eagerly right into them. How can it be wrong when it feels so right? Snap! The trap closes. When we don't recognize the existence and reality of the devil and his schemes, then we don't see the need to be encumbered with the whole armor of God. He finds us unprepared and easily overcomes us.

The answer to this strategy is to see the reality of what Daniel saw in **chapter 10**: "Be convinced of the reality of the devil and his very real power. Be aware of the heavenly dimension of the struggle. But remember too that you don't struggle alone."

Tremper Longman III: Who is the enemy Paul is referring to in Ephesians 6? Our ultimate enemy is Satan and his demonic powers. Our struggle against him encompasses three fronts, and we should not underestimate our enemy's strength. To do so will lead to the temptation to fight our battles in our own strength, and our own strength will lead to our quick and easy defeat. When we realize that we have no power to ourselves to fight the battles of life, we are driven to Jesus, our divine warrior. He is the One who provides us with the spiritual weapons we need to fight—truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Spirit, and prayer.

(1) The first front is the battle against evil "out there." Most Christians do not need to be convinced that there is a lot of sin and evil in the world. Wickedness emanates from institutions and people (unfortunately from Christians as well as non-Christians), from ourselves (as we will discover in the third front), as well as from others. . .

(2) Another front is the fight to "win souls." Opinions may differ, but I cringe every time I hear someone say, "I won a soul for Christ." Perhaps it's the arrogant voice that usually goes along with the claim. But I must admit that there is some truth to this old Christian expression. When we share the gospel with others, we are involved in warfare, just as real as, and indeed with longer lasting implications than, the battle of the Israelites against Jericho. . .

(3) The battle on the third front is that between the "new self" and the "old self." Jesus instructed us to take the beam out of our own eye before we take the speck out of our brother's eye (**Matt. 7:5**). In this way, he was telling us that the battle is not only against others, it is also within ourselves. Facing the deeply embedded evil of our own hearts is where the most bitter fighting occurs. It's like a civil war. Your enemy, your old self, is a dearly loved friend you really don't want to kill. The apostle Paul perceptively shared the struggle that went on in his own heart, knowing that it is a struggle we all go through (**Rom. 7:21–24a**).

S. Lewis Johnson: So the idea that all of this suggests is that Satan is a prince of a vast kingdom, a kingdom that is well organized with rulers and authorities, dominions, powers, evidently a kind of scale-down organization. Wouldn't you love to see the organizational chart of the Satanic kingdom, with Satan at the top and all of the organization of that kingdom? And then you would come down to the kingdom of Persia and also the individuals who had apparently authority territorially over certain parts of the world? It would not be surprising at all if we were able to see everything that exists in this spiritual world that we would find that the world has been divided up and that there is a spiritual authority, a spiritual ruler, a spiritual power from the evil one that does have a particular jurisdiction over that particular territory. . .

This chapter has a relationship to the nations too. I think this explains men like Hitler, explains men like Mussolini, it explains the problems that we have today because in Satan's kingdom, he is very well organized and he is seeking if at all possible to obstruct the accomplishment of the perfect will of God. And the men that rise up in one spot and rise up in another spot are often the direct result of the activity of the evil one and of his kingdom. The final manifestation of the evil one in this kingdom will be the rise of the Beast and the false prophet. And they are individuals who will carry out their ministry according to the direction and motivation and incentive and ennoblement, empowerment of the prince of the power of the air.

Bob Deffinbaugh: This text reminds us that **in our present condition** we are inadequately equipped to dwell in the presence of God. Here in **Daniel 10** we find Daniel utterly disarmed and disabled in the presence of God, and even in the presence of one of His holy angels. This is the norm, for we find that other men experience similar reactions when in the presence of holy heavenly beings. Indeed, there is even a sense of respect for the fallen angelic beings (see **Jude 9**). Only the unbelieving fallen beings show disregard for the angelic powers (**2 Peter 2:10; Jude 1:8-10**).

As we observe Daniel and other godly men **shrinking back in fear** when they find themselves in the presence of God, or of one of the holy angels, we can understand why it is necessary for us to put off this earthly, mortal, body and be clothed with a new, heavenly body. This enables us to enter into the heavens and to enjoy the blessedness of being in the presence of a holy God (**1 Cor. 15:40-53; 2 Cor. 5:1-4**).

Paul Lederach: The longest vision report of the book (**Dan. 11**) is now to be disclosed, with a most impressive staging. With this lengthy introduction, the writer alerts readers to pay special heed to the message and thus implies that receiving visions from God is no light matter. **Daniel 10** provides information about

1. Daniel's preparation.
2. The appearance of the heavenly messenger.
3. The conversation between the messenger, Gabriel, and Daniel--the one greatly beloved by God.
4. Parallels between Daniel and Ezekiel in receiving visions.
5. Parallels between Daniel and Isaiah in the "touch" and "call."
6. The book of truth—happenings on earth already decreed and the outcome determined by heaven.
7. Angelic protectors of the people of God—enabling the faithful to survive, regardless of how severe the struggle on earth will be.

The heaping up of these insights not only builds suspense, it also provides a context for receiving the message. In addition to establishing authority and reliability, it also encourages hope and confidence even though the message is of wars and suffering.

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **The Invisible War**
Introduction: Did you know that there is a warfare that goes on that we don't know about, that we don't see? And right here in this chapter, Daniel kind of rolls back the heavens for us and we're peeking into the heavenlies and we see some of the things that go on. We are soldiers in a fight, and our foe is invisible. We can't see Satan, but thank God he's not invincible. We can have victory over him. We're going to see some of the ways that we can do that here in this chapter.

Now, there are three heavens that the Bible teaches. There's the first heaven that we see with the naked eye. That is the clouds and the stars. We can see that. And then there's the second heaven. That's the galaxies in the solar system, and we can see that with a telescope. But then there's a third heaven and that is the heaven that we see by faith. We can't see it with a telescope and we can't see it with our eye, but it's there and it's very real. And there is a warfare that goes on there in the third heavens that we don't know about oftentimes.

I. The Start of This Invisible War
What starts warfare with a Christian? You know what it is? It is praying. Sometimes when we pray, we kind of stir things up. We stir up that invisible world because God begins to move on the behalf of the believer, but it also does the kingdom of darkness

begin to move. So for three weeks, this was a time of intense praying for Daniel. He ate just enough to keep up his strength so he can pursue God. He didn't eat his favorite foods. He didn't eat the things that he normally would like to eat. And also, he didn't anoint himself. Back in this day, they would rub oil on their bodies to anoint themselves. It would keep them cool in the heat. It would also help their skin from becoming dry.

II. The Soldiers of the Invisible War – 10:4

Here is a visitor that comes to see Daniel. Now notice how the Bible describes him. I don't think this was Jesus in this vision. You say, why? Well, because this angel, which I think is an angel, begins to speak. And look what he says in verse 13. He says, but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one in twenty days, but Lord Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of Persia. And so what he tells Daniel is, he says, look Daniel, I was coming to see you, but on the way down there was a prince, there was a demon from the kingdom of Persia, the prince of Persia, and he held me up. He kept me from coming to see you. I want to tell you something, friend. No demon can hold Jesus back.

He's held up by the prince of Persia. This is a demonic spirit over the realm of the kingdom of Persia. Okay, this is not a literal person. This is an angel. And he is in charge of that region of Satan's kingdom.

III. The Strategy of This War – 10:12

A. His Tactics

Satan's tactics are very simple. He uses whatever means necessary to hold or to keep God's will from taking place. Prayer is getting God's will done. And so Satan is opposed to that.

B. His Targets

1) Satan will attack the holy angels, trying to keep them from doing God's will.
2) He also attacks Israel because they are God's people and God uses Israel.
3) Also, he attacks believers. Daniel was also part of this. Do you know Satan will attack you and I as Christians?
4) Satan will attack Christ himself.

You can see these same 4 targets in Rev. 12.

IV. The Success in This War

You advance when you pray. Prayer is the weapon that wins the invisible war.

<u>4 Lessons about Prayer:</u>

1) Prayer produces burdens – don’t give up; pray persistently and with intensity
2) Prayer provokes battles – sometimes things get worse after you start to pray
   When you start a fight in the spiritual realm by praying and seeking God, you've got to finish it. You can't just hit and run.
3) Prayer precedes blessings – God gave Daniel strength and insight
4) Prayer penetrates barriers -- when Daniel had this vision, Persia was the

kingdom that was in charge, right? We've learned that in Daniel chapter 8. We also learned what happened after Persia was finished. What was the kingdom that defeated the Persians on earth? It was Greece, right? Alexander the Great came in, swiftly defeated the Persians and then took over the world. So what we see here is this is what happens in the heavenlies. This is what was going on. The prince of the kingdom of Persia was defeated and the prince of Greece moved in. And what happened on earth? The Persians were defeated. Alexander the Great conquered and defeated Darius and As a result of that, Greek culture began to spread all throughout the world. The world became one common language, which prepared the way for what? The coming of the gospel.

TEXT: Daniel 11:2-45

TITLE: PROPHECY CONCERNING WORLD HISTORY AS IT IMPACTS ISRAEL

BIG IDEA:
WORLD EVENTS CAUSING ISRAEL TURMOIL ARE PREDICTED FROM DANIEL'S TIME TO DESPICABLE ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES -- BEFORE JUMPING AHEAD TO THE ULTIMATE ANTICHRIST IN END TIMES

INTRODUCTION:

Stephen Miller: In the previous section the vision was introduced; now its contents are revealed – a history of key events leading up to the end. Gabriel begins with the Persian period, the time in which Daniel was then living, making reference to four of its kings (**v. 2**). Next he describes the Greek Empire under Alexander and its subsequent division into four sections after the great conqueror's death (**vv. 3-4**). Two of these divisions, the Ptolemaic and the Seleucid, receive special attention because of their important relationship to Israel (**vv. 5-20**). Palestine was located between them and was controlled first by the Ptolemies and then the Seleucids.

The historical material in **11:2-20**, however, is in reality an introduction to the exceptionally wicked persecutor of the Jews, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (**vv. 21-35**). Following Antiochus, Gabriel provides a description of the most villainous tyrant that Israel (and the world) will ever encounter, the eschatological Antichrist (**vv. 36-45**). The vision concludes with a characterization of Antichrist's reign of terror as the worst period in human history and a promise of deliverance and blessing for the saints (**12:1-3**). Emphasis is therefore placed on the activities of two individuals, Antiochus and Antichrist.

The historical details set forth in this prophecy are astounding. Wood asserts: "The detail of this history as presented provides one of the most remarkable predictive portions of all Scripture." Of course, the Bible records many other exact predictions made far in advance of their fulfillment.

David Thompson: If ever you want to know or prove that God is sovereign over the future, all you need to do is to turn to **Daniel 11**. **Daniel 11** is one of the most remarkable prophetic chapters in all of the Bible. In the first thirty-five verses alone, there are at least 135 prophecies which have been literally fulfilled and may be proved by a study of the history of this time period. This is the chapter that caused the heathen philosopher Porphyry (3rd century A.D.) to say the book of Daniel was a forgery. He said there was no way these things could have been so accurately predicted before they happened.

John Walvoord: Interestingly enough, it was the eleventh chapter of Daniel with its detailed prophecy of about two hundred years of history that prompted the heathen philosopher Porphyry (third century A.D.) to attack the book of Daniel as a forgery. In

his study, Porphyry established the fact that history corresponded closely to the prophetic revelation of **Daniel 11:1-35**, and the correspondence was so precise that he was persuaded that no one could have prophesied these events in the future. Accordingly, he solved the problem by taking the position that the book of Daniel was written after the events occurred, that is, it was written in the second century B.C. This attack prompted Jerome to defend the book of Daniel and to issue his own commentary, which for over one thousand years thereafter was considered the standard commentary on the book of Daniel. . .

In attempting the difficult exegesis of this portion, the general principal should be observed that prophecy, as far as it goes, is accurate, but that prophecy is selective. The revelation does not contain all the history of the period nor name all the rulers. It is not always possible to determine why some facts are included and others excluded. But the total picture of struggle and turmoil which characterized the period of the third empire is portrayed by special reference to Antiochus Epiphanes, who is given more space than any other ruler in this chapter because of the relevance of his activities to the people of Israel.

(:2A) PROLOGUE – AUTHENTICATING THIS AMAZING PROPHECY

"*And now I will tell you the truth.*"

Andrew Hill: The repetition of the word "*truth*" (Heb. *'emet*) no doubt authenticates the revelation by connecting it to the "*Book of Truth*" mentioned previously (**10:21**).

I. (:2b) CONCERNING PERSIA

A. Three Additional Kings

"*Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia.*"

B. Fourth Extremely Wealthy King = Xerxes I

"*Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of them;*"

John Walvoord: According to Daniel, the climax of Persian rulers came with Xerxes I who in secular history used his great riches and a period of some four years to gather a great army amounting to hundreds of thousands, one of the largest armies in the ancient world. The expedition which he launched in 480 B.C. against Greece was disastrous, however, and Xerxes never recovered. The Ahasuerus of **Esther 1** may be identified with Xerxes I, and the ill-fated expedition against Greece may have occurred between **chapters 1** and **2** of Esther. Details on the Persian Empire are not given here because these are covered adequately in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Ether, insofar as they related to the people of Israel and the plan of God, and these records are supplemented by the prophetical books Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The revelation turns immediately to details of the third empire not given elsewhere in the Word of God.

C. Conflict with Greece

"*as soon as he becomes strong through his riches,*
he will arouse the whole empire against the realm of Greece."

Bruce Hurt:

PERSIAN KINGS DURING TIME OF ISRAEL'S RESTORATION (559-404BC)			
NAME OF KING	**DATE (BC)**	**BIBLICAL NAME**	**BIBLE REFERENCE**
Cyrus	559-530	Cyrus	Isa 44:28, 45:1 Da 1:21, 6:28, 10:1 Ezra 1-3
Cambyses II	530-522	-	Da 11:2
Pseudo – Smerdis	522	-	Da 11:2
Darius I – the Great	522-486	Darius (Hystaspes) (**Not** Darius the Mede of Da 6:1, 11:1)	Ezra 4:5, 24 Ezra 5:5, 6, 7 Ezra 6:1, 12-15
Xerxes I	486-464	Ahasuerus	Esther 1:1, 2, 10:3
Artaxerxes I	465-424	Artaxerxes	Ezra 4:7-8, 11, 23 Ezra 6:14, 7:1,7,11-12,21 Ezra 8:1 Neh 2:1, 5:14, 13:6
Xerxes II	424	-	None
Darius II	423-404	-	None

Homer Kent: Since this vision occurred during the reign of Cyrus, the three kings who would "*yet*" stand up are Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis, and Darius Hystaspis. The next monarch (4th) was Xerxes, who was fabulously wealthy, and used his treasures to maintain a huge army (cf. Herodotus iii, 96; vi, 27-29), and made an expedition against Greece.

Tremper Longman III: Our first thought, and perhaps the best guess, is Xerxes I (486–465 B.C.). This Persian was a great and powerful king, and it is arguable that he set off the chain of events that over a century later led to the downfall of Persia at the hands of the Greeks, for he chose to invade areas controlled by Greeks. He failed at this attempt, being defeated at Salamis in 480 B.C., but his actions led to a Greek-Persian conflict that ended with Alexander.

Andrew Hill: The fact that two hundred years of Persian history are compressed into a single verse is due primarily to the intent of Daniel's original query concerning the fate of the Hebrew people (cf. **10:14**). The message of the revealing angel gives prominence to the kingdoms of the Ptolemies (the "*kings of the south*") and the Seleucids (the "*kings of the north*") because their political and military interplay directly affects the history of Israel (**11:5–20**).

II. (:3-4) CONCERNING GREECE – A MIGHTY WARRIOR KING

A. (:3) Alexander the Great

"*And a mighty king will arise,*
and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases."

Bruce Hurt:

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">THE GREEK
PERIOD
(331-63BC)</th></tr>
<tr><td>Alexander the Great
(331-323BC)</td><td colspan="3">Division of Alexander's Empire into 4 Parts:
Ptolemaic and Seleucid Dominate
(Da 7:6, Da 8:8, Da 8:21,22, Da 11:4)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Ptolemaic Dynasty
Dominates Israel
(323-204BC)</td><td>Seleucid Dynasty
Dominates Israel
(204-165BC)</td><td>Maccabean Revolt and Rule
(165-63BC)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Antiochus IV Epiphanes
(175-164BC)
(Da 8:23)
Abomination of Desolation
(165BC)
(Da 11:31)</td></tr>
</table>

Tremper Longman III: We know with certainty the identity of the "*mighty king*" of **verse 3**—none other than **Alexander**, whom we call "**the Great**." But as soon as he came on the scene, he disappeared from it. Alexander was king of Macedon, succeeding his father Philip, in 336 B.C., and by 330 he had conquered Persia. He continued his conquests and reached the Indus, but died in 323, leaving his mentally challenged half brother Philip III and his son Alexander IV in charge. These two were under the guidance of Perdiccas. All three were eventually murdered: Perdiccas in 321, Philip III

in 317, and Alexander IV in 311. Power passed into the hands of Alexander's four leading generals—thus the reference in **verse 4** to the "*four winds of heaven*."

B. (:4) Fourfold Division of the Kingdom

"*But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded; for his sovereignty will be uprooted and given to others besides them.*"

Homer Kent: This prophecy is in accord with Greek history, for the great empire of Alexander was not inherited by any of his sons or other relatives, but was seized by his generals after Alexander died at the age of 32. After warring among themselves, they finally achieved a fourfold division of the empire, under the control of Ptolemy (Egypt), Antigonus (Babylon, North Syria), Lysimachus (Thrace, Bithynia), and Cassander (Macedonia). Naturally this fourfold division would not present as strong a kingdom as Alexander's unified empire; hence it was not "*according to his dominion wherewith he ruled*."

Andrew Hill: The revelation of Daniel's final vision repeats elements of the earlier vision of the four great beasts that arise out of the churning sea, in this case the leopard with four heads (**7:6**). The uprooting of Alexander's empire and its division into quadrants (**v.4b**) recalls the breaking of the single horn of the goat and its regrowth "*toward the four winds of heaven*" in Daniel's vision of the ram and the goat (**8:8**).

III. (:5-20) CONCERNING EGYPT AND SYRIA (THE KINGS OF THE SOUTH –KS -- AND THE KINGS OF THE NORTH -- KN)

A. (:5-19) Conflicts between Southern and Northern Kings (Ptolemies and Seleucids)

1. (:**5-9**) Conflict between Egypt and Syria

a. (:**5**) Introduction of the King of the South

"*Then the king of the South will grow strong, along with one of his princes who will gain ascendancy over him and obtain dominion; his domain will be a great dominion indeed.*"

Homer Kent: The first king of the south (i.e. Egypt -- **KS**) was Ptolemy Lagus (called "Soter"). Associated with him as his general was Seleucus Nicator, who had been forced to flee from Babylonia. Later Seleucus recovered Babylonia by defeating Antigonus at Gaza (312 B.C.) and built the Seleucid Empire (Syria) which greatly exceeded that of the Ptlemies, reaching from Phrygia to the Indus.

Tremper Longman III: The story of the **Ptolemies** and **Seleucids** begins in earnest in **verse 5**. To start, the king of the south is Ptolemy I. He had taken Egypt from the point of Alexander's death. The king of the north was Seleucus I. Upon Perdiccas's assassination (421 B.C.), he was given the satrapy of Babylon, but in 316 had sought refuge with Ptolemy in Egypt to avoid conflict with another powerful Diadochi,

Antigonus. When Ptolemy and Seleucus defeated Antigonus in Gaza in 312, Seleucus returned to Babylon. In 301 B.C. at the Battle of Ipsus the struggles between the various Diadochi were resolved when the elderly Antigonus and his son Demetrius were defeated. It was at this time that Syria-Palestine was assigned to Seleucus. However, his long-standing ally Ptolemy moved against his holdings and occupied Palestine. Seleucus and his successors never gave up claim to this area, however, so there was now tension between the two that would play itself out to the end of the period.

Andrew Hill: It is generally agreed that the citations to the "*king of the South*" (**v.5**) and the "*king of the North*" (**v.6**) refer to the rulers of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt and the Seleucid dynasty of Syria and western Mesopotamia. These were the two most powerful of the Hellenistic kingdoms emerging from Alexander's divided empire. These two kingdoms vied for control of the **land bridge** connecting Africa and Asia, since it meant both economic and military advantage for that kingdom able to establish its authority over the land of Palestine. Naturally, the political and military energies expended by the Ptolemies and the Seleucids on controlling this key piece of real estate in the ancient Near East had a direct impact on the Jews living in Palestine.

Stephen Miller: Especially significant is the fact that from the Seleucid kingdom eventually would appear the evil Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the "*little horn*" of **chap. 8**.

b. (:**6**) Attempted Alliance with King of the North

"*And after some years they will form an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the South will come to the king of the North to carry out a peaceful arrangement. But she will not retain her position of power, nor will he remain with his power, but she will be given up, along with those who brought her in, and the one who sired her, as well as he who supported her in those times.*"

Homer Kent: After a number of years, new kings were on the thrones of their respective counries, but they were still kings of the north (Syria - **KN**) and the south (Egypt). Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus (KS, 280-247), married Antiochus II (KN, or Syria), 261-246. This was a political marriage, and Antiochus II was forced to put aside his own wife Laodiceia in order to marry Berenice. Two years later when Ptolemy died, Antiochus II abandoned Berenice and returned to his former wife. The former wife gained revenge by having Antiochus II poisoned, and having Berenice murdered. Thus the attempted alliance ended in bloodshed and complete failure.

c. (:**7-8**) Invasion of Syria by Ptolemy Euergetes

"*But one of the descendants of her line will arise in his place, and he will come against their army and enter the fortress of the king of the North, and he will deal with them and display great strength. 8 And also their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold he will take into captivity to*

Egypt, and he on his part will refrain from attacking the king of the North for some years."

Homer Kent: Ptolemy Philadelphus was succeeded by Ptolemy Euergetes (III, 246-222), who was the brother of Berenice and thus of "*her root*." He invaded Syria and had great success against Seleucus Callinicus (KN, 246-226), even to putting to death Laodiceia, the murderess of Berenice. According to Jerome, Ptolemy took back to Egypt with him 40,000 talents of silver and 2,500 idol statues.

Andrew Hill: The reference to "*one from her family*" (**v.7a**) is probably an allusion to Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221 BC). He was the brother of Berenice and succeeded his father Ptolemy II in 246 BC. He waged a successful sea and land campaign against the Seleucid Empire, overrunning much of Syria and avenging his sister Berenice's death by executing Laodice (**v.7b**). According to tradition, among the booty plundered by Ptolemy III were images of Egyptian deities carried away by the Persian King Cambyses in 525 BC (which eventually ended up in the possession of the Greeks; **v.8a**). According to Collins (Daniel, 378), Ptolemy III was given the name "Euergetes" (or "benefactor") by his people because he had returned the images of the Egyptian gods to their homeland (cf. Hartman and Di Lella, 290). There was a lull in the conflict between the two kingdoms from 244–242 BC (**v.8b**). Seleucus II mounted a counter-invasion of Egypt in 242 BC but was eventually forced to withdraw his troops from the region (**v.9**).

d. (:**9**) Invasion of Egypt by Seleucus Callinicus

"*Then the latter will enter the realm of the king of the South, but will return to his own land.*"

Homer Kent: Seleucus Callinicus (KN) conducted an invasion of Egypt (c. 240), but was unsuccessful and had to return home.

John Walvoord: Seleucus, however, was defeated completely and was forced to "*return into his own land*." This, of course, was only the beginning of the seesaw battle between the two nations. The inclusion of this background material leads up to the important point, which is the burden of the prophecy in **verses 10-19** – the ascendancy of Syria over Egypt and the return of the Holy Land to Syrian control. This set the stage for the persecutions of Israel under Antiochus Epiphanes, which is the major concern of **verses 21-25** of this prophecy.

2. (:**10-12**) Conflict Continued

a. **(:10)** Two Sons (Especially Antiochus III the Great) Make Serious Inroads into Egypt

"*And his sons will mobilize and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one of them will keep on coming and overflow and pass through, that he may again wage war up to his very fortress.*"

Homer Kent: His two sons, Seleucus Ceraunus (227-224) and Antiochus the Great (III, 224-187), stirred themselves for war. After Ceraunus was killed in Asia Minor, Antiochus the Great moved south through Egyptian territory and captured the Egyptian fortress Gaza. Ptolemy Philopator (KS, 222-205) offered no serious resistance at this time.

b. (:**11a**) King of Egypt Enraged and Engaged in Battle
"*And the king of the South will be enraged*
and go forth and fight with the king of the North."

c. (:**11b-12**) Ptolemy Philopator Conquers for a Brief Time
"*Then the latter will raise a great multitude, but that multitude will be given into the hand of the former. 12 When the multitude is carried away, his heart will be lifted up, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail.*"

Homer Kent: Ptolemy Philopator (KS) eventually raised a huge army of 73,000 men, 5,000 cavalry, and 73 elephants, and overcame Antiochus the Great (KN), so that the army of Antiochus came into the hands of Ptolemy. Ptolemy Philopator defeated Antiochus at Raphia, and caused the Syrians to lose 10,000 infantry, 300 cavalry, 5 elephants, and 4,000 prisoners (according to Polybius). However, Ptolemy did not press his victory, but resumed his dissolute life.

Andrew Hill: The next passage (**vv.11–13**) distills <u>two campaigns</u> waged against Egypt by Antiochus III. In the first, Antiochus was defeated at Raphia by Ptolemy in 217 BC (**v.11**). As a result, Ptolemy was able to regain control of Palestine and southern Syria (besides inflicting heavy casualties on the Seleucids (some 17,000 of 68,000 troops; **v.12a**).

Yet Ptolemy would "*not remain triumphant*" (**v.12b**), for he failed to press his advantage and made peace with Antiochus and the Seleucids (cf. Lucas, 281). Fourteen years later, after extending Seleucid rule into Asia Minor and eastern central Asia, Antiochus again mustered his forces to invade Egypt (**v.13**). He defeated Scopas (the Aetolian mercenary commander of the army) and the Egyptians at Banias (or Panias, near one of the sources of the Jordan River) in 200 BC, and the control of Judea now passed from the Ptolemies to the Seleucids. The turn of events in the royal family of the Ptolemies at this time no doubt precipitated the actions of Antiochus against Egypt. In 204 BC, Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–204 BC) and his queen died mysteriously (following unrest in Egypt that began as early as 207 BC). Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–181 BC) was only a boy six years of age when he succeeded his father to the throne of Egypt. Antiochus was able to exploit the political upheaval and low morale among the Egyptians to military advantage.

3. (:**13-15**) <u>Antiochus III the Great Fights against Egypt</u>
a. (:**13**) Impressive Troops and Weapons
"*For the king of the North will again raise a greater multitude*

than the former, and after an interval of some years he will press on with a great army and much equipment."

Homer Kent: Antiochus the Great (KN) raised an even greater army because of successes in the East, and 13 or 14 (203 B.C.) years after the defeat at Raphia he came again against Egypt.

b. (:**14**) Aided by Rebels Who See Weakness in Egypt

"*Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the South; the violent ones among your people will also lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down.*"

John MacArthur: Violent Jews wanted Judean independence from Egypt, but failed in their revolt.

Homer Kent: By this time Ptolemy Philopator had died, and was succeeded by his four or five year old son, Ptolemy Epiphanes. Realizing a weakness in Egypt, many rose in rebellion against KS, including Antiochus the Great who had made a league with Philip of Macedon, some rebels within Egypt, and even some Jews who allied themselves with Antiochus against Egypt.

Tremper Longman III: **Verse 14** is obscure in detail, but acknowledges that these great events caused **turmoil** among the Jewish people. We are not sure to whom the "*violent men*" refer, but we do know there were political power plays going on at the time in Jerusalem. The **Oniads** controlled the high priesthood and supported Egyptian rule, but the **Tobiads**, a politically powerful family related by marriage to the Oniads, leaned in the opposite direction. Again, we are not even sure about what is meant by "*vision*." It may even be that some took heart at the prophecies of Daniel, giving them courage to think they were at the time when the end of foreign oppression was to arrive. They may have taken matters into their own hands, but failed. We cannot be certain.

c. (:**15**) Successful Siege against City of Sidon

"*Then the king of the North will come, cast up a siege mound, and capture a well-fortified city; and the forces of the South will not stand their ground, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand.*"

Homer Kent: As Antiochus the Great (KN) came against Egypt, the Egyptian general Scopas was sent to prevent him. Gen. Scopas and the Egyptians were finally defeated when Antiochus captured the city of Sidon.

Tremper Longman III: Whereas Ptolemy IV did not follow up his victory at Raphia with Antiochus III, Antiochus pursued Scopas to Sidon; this is likely the reference in **verse 15**. Collins suggests that the "*best troops*" indicates Scopas's Aetolian mercenary troops.

4. (:**16-19**) Campaigns of Antiochus III the Great

a. (:**16a**) His Autonomy and Power

"*But he who comes against him will do as he pleases, and no one will be able to withstand him;*"

Andrew Hill: This invader will do "*as he pleases*" (**v.16a**)—an expression applied previously to Alexander the Great (**v.3**) and subsequently to the king who exalts himself (**v.36**).

b. (:**16b**) His Focus on Palestine

"*he will also stay for a time in the Beautiful Land, with destruction in his hand.*"

Homer Kent: Antiochus then turned his attention to Palestine ("*the glorious land*"), and his approach was irresistible. However, Antiochus treated the Jews with favor because they had aided him against the Egyptians.

c. (:**17**) His Failed Scheme to Compromise Egypt with Cleopatra

"*And he will set his face to come with the power of his whole kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he will also give him the daughter of women to ruin it. But she will not take a stand for him or be on his side.*"

Homer Kent: Antiochus determined to completely destroy his enemy Egypt (KS), so he contracted an agreement whereby he gave his daughter, Cleopatra, in marriage to Ptolemy Epiphanes. He hoped she would be more faithful to her father than to her husband, but this was not the case. Thus the scheme of Antiochus did not work to his advantage. The expression "*daughter of women*" may indicate the very essence of femininity (so Young, and Montgomery).

d. (:**18**) His Focus on the Mediterranean Coastlands

"*Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many. But a commander will put a stop to his scorn against him; moreover, he will repay him for his scorn.*"

Homer Kent: Antiochus then turned his attention to the Mediterranean coastlands and islands, and this brought him in conflict with the Romans. He was defeated at Magnesia in 190 B.C. by the Roman Lucius Scipio, and his boastings came back upon his own head.

Tremper Longman III: Antiochus never tired of **ambition**, and in accordance with the prophecy of **verse 18** started annexing parts of Asia Minor as well as some Greek islands. In 196 B.C. he encroached on Thrace. All of this began to arouse the attention of the new power in that part of the world, Rome. He did not obey Roman warnings, so the Roman senate sent the consul Lucius Cornelius Scipio against him. Antiochus was

defeated at Thermopylae in 191 and Magnesia in 190. He then had to retreat to the core of his empire. He had been reduced to stealing precious materials from the temple of Bel at Elymais, and he died in 187.

His son Seleucus IV Philopator (187–175) succeeded him, but he was not popular because of the burden he put on the people to raise the tribute to keep the Romans off his back. One of his ministers was a man named Heliodorus. According to 2 Maccabees 3 he was the one who tried to sack the temple in Jerusalem. Seleucus IV died under mysterious circumstances just as his younger brother, who had been made a hostage in Rome after the battle of Magnesia, was returning to his homeland. That younger brother's name was **Antiochus IV**, who got the nickname **Epiphanes**. The attention of the text turns now to this highly significant figure.

John Walvoord: In this series of events, the prophecies of **verses 13-17** are accurately fulfilled. Antiochus the Great begins to suffer reverses, however, as indicated in **verse 18**, where "*prince for his own behalf*" refers to the Roman consul Lucius Scipio Asiaticus, who, as Young expresses it "brought about the defeat of Antiochus." The reference to "the reproach offered by him," refers to Antiochus' scornful treatment of the Roman ambassadors at a meeting in Lysimachia, when he said contemptuously, "Asia did not concern them, the Romans, and he was not subject to their orders."

This defeat came about in the following manner. Having successfully sustained his conquest against Egypt by defeating Scopas, Antiochus then turned his attention to the threat from the west and attempted to equal the conquests of Alexander the Great by conquering Greece. In this he was notably unsuccessful, being defeated in 191 B.C. at Thermopylae north of Athens and again in 189 B.C. at Magnesia on the Maeander River southeast of Ephesus by soldiers of Rome and Pergamum under the leadership of the Roman general Scipio. This fulfilled the prophecies of **verses 18** and **19**, and from an historic viewpoint, was important in removing from Europe the control by Asiatic governments. This paved the way for Roman expansion later.

Antiochus the Great, who could have gone down in history as one of the great conquerors of the ancient world if he had been content to leave Greece alone, instead fulfilled the prophecy of **verse 19** in that he had to return to his own land, defeated and broken. He was killed trying to plunder a temple in Elam.

e. (:**19**) His Ultimate Return Home and Demise
"*So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and be found no more.*"

Homer Kent: Following his defeat Antiochus had to abandon further conquests. He returned home and was ultimately killed trying to plunder the temple of Belus in Elymais.

Tremper Longman III: The story of Antiochus III the Great's reign continues through verse 19. The significance given to his reign likely has much to do with the fact that it

was through his agency that Palestine finally shifted from Ptolomaic control to Seleucid control, thus setting the scene for the horrors of his son's reign (cf. below on **vv. 21ff**.).

B. (:20) Northern King (Seleucus Philopator) Who Dispatches an Oppressor (Heliodorus)

"*Then in his place one will arise who will send an oppressor*
through the Jewel of his kingdom;
yet within a few days he will be shattered,
though neither in anger nor in battle."

Homer Kent: He was succeeded by Seleucus Philopator (187-176). Because he had to pay to the Romans annually an enormous tribute of 1000 talents, he sent his prime minister Heliodorus to seize the funds of the temple treasury in Jerusalem (cf. II Macc. 7). Shortly afterward, Seleucus was mysteriously removed, probably through poisoning by Heliodorus.

Andrew Hill: Towner, 157, comments that "the brief and undistinguished reign of the son of Antiochus, Seleucus IV Philopater (187–175 BC), is dismissed in **verse 20**." Antiochus the Great had two sons. Seleucus IV succeeded his father on the throne; his brother Antiochus was held hostage in Rome. The reference to the "*tax collector*" (**v.20a**) is probably a reference to **Heliodorus**, the finance minister of Seleucus (cf. 2 Macc 3 on Heliodorus's attempt to confiscate the monies in the treasury of the Jerusalem temple). Collins (Daniel, 381) summarizes that the reign of Seleucus IV "was dominated by financial exigency, because of the tribute to Rome." Seleucus was assassinated in 175 BC in a plot hatched by Heliodorus (possibly in a conspiracy including Antiochus, who had been released from prison in Rome). The report that Seleucus died "*not in anger or in battle*" (**v.20b**) may indicate the king died in **disgrace**, since he was not killed fighting valiantly on the battlefield (cf. Montgomery, 445).

IV. (:21-35) CONCERNING ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES (CLIMACTIC KING OF THE NORTH) – FORESHADOWING FUTURE ANTICHRIST -- GOD'S PEOPLE WILL SUFFER PERSECUTION IN THIS LIFE

End Time Mysteries:

- The list of the back and forth interactions of the kings of the north from the Seleucid Empire and the kings of the south from the Ptolemaic Empire end with a king of the north called Antiochus Epiphanes.
    - He's not the last Seleucid king; there were several more kings to follow Antiochus Epiphanes. He is simply the last Seleucid king listed in Daniel's vision.
- Israel was now part of the Seleucid Empire.
- Antiochus Epiphanes was the first ruler in history to try and force a nation to change its faith and culture.
    - By official decree, Antiochus Epiphanes forced the Jewish people in

Israel to become "Greek," to worship Greek gods and adopt Greek culture.
    - If they resisted, they were persecuted, arrested, and/or killed.
    - Antiochus Epiphanes removed the high priest Onias from his office and replaced him with his brother, Joshua.
    - Joshua was in favor of Israel becoming a Greek nation. He began to speed up the process of transforming Israel and the Jewish people into a Greek nation.
- The majority of the Jewish people refused to worship Greek gods and adopt Greek culture, so they revolted.
    - The Maccabean Revolt occurred during the years 167 to 160 BC.
    - After 3 ½ years, the Jewish rebels took back Jerusalem and restored the temple.
- In the end, the Jewish people won their freedom from the Seleucid king, who met with a very unfortunate death.

https://endtimemysteries.com/2020/07/20/daniel-chapter-eleven-outline/

A. (:21-24) His Rise to Power, 1st Campaign against Egypt and Scheming Tactics

1. (:**21**) Usurping the Throne

"*And in his place a despicable person will arise,*
on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred,
but he will come in a time of tranquility
and seize the kingdom by intrigue."

Homer Kent: Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164) had no legitimate claim to the throne, being the late king's brother (and thus a younger son of Antiochus the Great). The late king (Seleucus Philopator) had two sons, Demetrius and an infant also named Antiochus. However, by various intrigues and political maneuverings he gained the throne.

Tremper Longman III: According to Daniel, the struggles between the south (Ptolemaic Egypt) and the north (Seleucid Syria) culminated with one ruler, a "*contemptible person*" **(v. 21**). The prophecy's assessment of his importance and his character is based exclusively on the **turmoil** that his rule created in Jerusalem. This man greatly offended the orthodox Jewish sensibilities of his time. For this, he became paradigmatic of human power that exalts itself with disregard for God himself. We will see that his actions are considered paradigmatic with ultimate wickedness toward the end of the chapter.

John Walvoord: The title **Epiphanes**, meaning "*glorious*," was a title which Antiochus gave himself, in keeping with his desire to be regarded as god. The description here given is God's viewpoint of him because of his immoral life, persecution, and hatred of the people of God. His life was characterized by intrigue, expediency, and lust for power in which honor was always secondary.

2. (:**22**) 1st Campaign against Egypt -- Overwhelming Forces and Key Leaders

"*And the overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant.*"

Homer Kent: Antiochus routed the forces of Egypt in battles between Pelusium and the Casian Mountains. The "*prince of the covenant*" may be a reference to the high priest Onias III, who was deposed and later murdered. (Others take the view of referring it to Ptolemy Philometor who was defeated.)

John MacArthur: Egypt's armies were swept away by Antiochus' invading forces as by a flood (cf. "*flood*" for military onslaught, **9:26**). Israel's "*prince of the covenant*," Onias III, was murdered by his own defecting brother Menelaus at the request of Antiochus (171 B.C.).

3. (:**23**) Deceptive Alliance with Egypt to Increase His Power

"*And after an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small force of people.*"

Homer Kent: Antiochus Epiphanes adopted a policy of feigned friendship with Egypt. He pretended to support his nephew Ptolemy Philometor against another of his nephews Ptolemy Euergetes. However, it was merely a cove to advance his own interests. Some historians claim that Antiochus Epiphanes even managed to have himself crowned king at Memphis.

4. (:**24**) Plunder and Distribution of Foreign Booty to Increase His Influence

"*In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest parts of the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, booty, and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but only for a time.*"

Homer Kent: Antiochus Epiphanes greatly plundered his conquered lands, but differed from his predecessors by distributing the spoils lavishly to the people (so say Livy, I Macc. 3:30, Polybius), thus winning friends to himself. He also used the device of keeping a strong garrison at Pelusium on the border of Egypt, so that his entry into Egypt at any time would be unobstructed.

B. (:25-28) His 2nd Campaign against Egypt, Corrupt Diplomacy and Covenant Hostility

1. (:**25-26**) 2nd Campaign against Egypt

"*And he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South with a large army; so the king of the South will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war; but he will not stand, for schemes will be devised against him. 26 And those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain.*"

Homer Kent: Antiochus Epiphanes made a second expedition against Egypt. He defeated Ptolemy Physcon (or perhaps Ptolemy Philometor). One of the reasons for the Egyptian defeat was apparently treason by some of Ptolemy's men. It is known that some of his supporters did desert him. (Specific historical data as to the nature of this treason is still lacking, however.)

Tremper Longman III: **Verse 25** turns our attention now to Antiochus's actions against the south. Polybius tells us that it was actually the south that was the aggressor, but the pivotal first battle took place as the northern army passed into southern territory. The political situation in the south was that, after the death of Cleopatra the wife of Ptolemy V, who served as regent until 176 B.C., her young son Ptolemy VI Philometer took the throne. Two of his advisors were the real power, however, Eulaeus and Lenaeus. They were the ones who initiated a new anti-Syrian policy, and Antiochus was likely making a preemptive strike against them. The battle was joined south of Gaza near Pelusium, and Antiochus won the day. Ptolemy was a young man at the time and the defeat was probably to be blamed on the two advisors, who may be the referent to the phrase "*those who eat from the king's provisions*" (**v. 26**).

2. (:**27**) Corrupt Diplomacy

"*As for both kings, their hearts will be intent on evil,*
and they will speak lies to each other at the same table;
but it will not succeed, for the end is still to come at the appointed time."

Homer Kent: The two kings probably are Antiochus Epiphanes and Ptolemy Philometor who presumably were working together to overcome Ptolemy Physoc. (Both Livy and Polybius state this to be true.) However, they both were more interested in their own successes.

John Whitcomb: This is a remarkable description of false, superficial, corrupt diplomacy. How much of this (speaking lies at the table) is going on today in international diplomacy?

3. (:**28**) Covenant Hostility

"*Then he will return to his land with much plunder;*
but his heart will be set against the holy covenant,
and he will take action and then return to his own land."

Homer Kent: Antiochus Epiphanes returned from Egypt with much plunder, and marched through Judea. He put down an insurrection led by Jason (see I Macc. 1:20 ff, II Macc. 5) and took the opportunity to plunder the temple.

Andrew Hill: Antiochus IV ("*the king of the North*") returned to Syria with "*great wealth*" (**v.28a**) as a result of his victory over Ptolemy VI and the Egyptians. The phrase "*his heart will be set against the holy covenant*" (**v.28b**) describes both the venting of his anger in frustration at the setback in his failed siege of Alexandria and also some **deeper hatred of the Jews**—almost a demonic malignancy directed against

God and his people. The expression "*holy covenant*" (**v.28b**) is an umbrella term encompassing the people of God's holy covenant, the Jews, and their land of Judah—"all things religious in Israel" (especially the Jerusalem temple, cf. Wood, 299). Seow, 179, comments that after withdrawing his forces from the failed siege of Alexandria, Antiochus set "his heart on an easier target—the Jews."

John Walvoord: Antiochus, returning from Egypt with great riches, began to manifest his hatred against the people of Israel and his covetousness in relation to the wealth of the temple. This is indicated in the statement, *His heart shall be against the holy covenant*.

C. (:29-35) His 3rd Campaign against Egypt

1. (:**29**) 3rd Campaign against Egypt

"*At the appointed time he will return and come into the South,*
but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before."

Homer Kent: Antiochus Epiphanes made a third expedition against Egypt (168) without the success of his previous invasions. This campaign was directed against the two Ptolemy brothers, Philometor and Physcon, who had become reconciled to each other.

2. (:**30a**) Disheartening Opposition from Roman Ships

"*For ships of Kittim will come against him;*
therefore he will be disheartened,"

John Whitcomb: These ships from Rome (who is already beginning to show her power) will blockade his efforts and prevent him from taking Egypt. He will become disheartened. The fourth mighty world power is already on the horizon.

Homer Kent: The two Ptolemies had sought the aid of the Romans who responded by sending a fleet to contact Antiochus Epiphanes at the siege of Alexandria. Popilius Laenas commanded the Roman ships, and delivered to Antiochus the demand of the Roman Senate that he desist further aggression on threat of provoking Roman attack. Popilius drew a circle in the sand with his staff around Antiochus, and commanded him to reach his decision before he stepped out of the circle. Whereupon Antiochus unwillingly agreed. He then returned home by way of Judea, and gathered information concerning those Jews who would support him (I.e., apostate Jews).

3. (:**30b**) Renewed Rage against the Holy Covenant

"*and will return*
and become enraged at the holy covenant
and take action;
so he will come back
and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant."

4. (:**31**) Attack on Worship and Erection of Abomination of Desolation

"*And forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress,*

and do away with the regular sacrifice.
And they will set up the abomination of desolation."

Homer Kent: The armed forces of Antiochus Epiphanes stood as guards at the temple, and regular worship was discontinued. On the sabbath day, the city was attacked, women and children were captured, and multitudes were slain. His army occupied the citadel overlooking the temple. Heathen idolatry was made mandatory, and Hellenic culture was enforced on Jewish life. The climax of proganation was the erection of the image of Zeus Olympius in the Jewish temple on the altar of burnt offering.

Andrew Hill: The "*temple fortress*" (**v.31a**) was either the temple complex itself, which functioned secondarily as a military citadel at this time (so Montgomery, 457), or an adjacent structure on the temple mount that served as a garrison and armory (cf. Goldingay, 302). This temple citadel was rebuilt and fortified and became the base of operations for Antiochus's forces in quelling the "*revolt*" in Jerusalem (cf 1 Macc 1:29–35). The citadel was called the Akra, and "for a period of twenty-five years the Akra stood as a loathsome symbol of pagan domination" (Hartman and Di Lella, 299; cf. 1 Macc 3:45; 14:36).

5. (:**32**) Contrasting Responses by the Jews in Jerusalem
   a. Response of Wickedness
      "*And by smooth words he will turn to godlessness*
      those who act wickedly toward the covenant,"

Tremper Longman III: The people of God were split into two parties (**v. 32**): those who supported Antiochus and his program of Hellenization of Judea and those who did not. Jason had earlier been removed from the high priesthood and replaced by a person named Menelaus, who was not even a member of the right family to be a priest. But he was probably supported by the powerful Tobiads and simply outbid Jason for the position. However, while Antiochus was waging his second Egyptian campaign, Jason, the deposed high priest, heard a rumor that Antiochus had been killed and so he moved against Menelaus. However, Antiochus, upset about the frustrations of his plans in Egypt, was far from dead. Thus, upon his return he acted against God's people. He had many massacred and sold as slaves.

Andrew Hill: The Jews of Jerusalem divided into two camps in response to Antiochus's temple desecration and his attendant persecution of those adhering to their ancestral religious rituals and practices. One group is identified as those who have "*violated the covenant*" (**v.32a**), corrupted by Antiochus's "*flattery*" (mentioned previously as "*those who forsake the holy covenant,*" **v.30c**). The "*forsakers*" (Heb. *rš ʿ*, "act culpably, make oneself guilty"; GK 8399) of the covenant are those who have already "*acted wickedly*" with respect to God's law as codified in the Mosaic covenant (suggested by the participial form of the verb; cf. Wood, 301). The word typically connotes the "wicked acts" of disobedience or general unfaithfulness to the stipulations of God's covenant with Israel enacted at Sinai, but implicit in this disloyalty is false worship in violation of the command not to worship idols (**Ex 20:3–4**; cf. **9:5; 1Ki 8:47; Ne 9:33; 2Ch 22:3**).

The reference to "*flattery*" ("*smooth words*," NASB; Heb. *ḥālāq*, "smooth, smoothness") probably alludes to the enticing promises made by Antiochus to bestow honor and wealth on those Jews who join in the support of his pagan policies (cf. 1 Macc 2:18; 2 Macc 7:24). The book of 1 Maccabees reports that many Jews abandoned the law of Moses at this time and joined in the pagan worship and evil deeds promoted by Antiochus's officers (1 Macc 1:51–52; 2:15).

b. Response of Righteousness

"*but the people who know their God*
will display strength and take action."

Homer Kent: Some Jews yielded to the purposes of Antiochus, and apostatized form the religion of Israel. But those who remained true to God refused to eat unclean things, and many died for their faith.

Andrew Hill: The second group of Jews are those who "*firmly resist*" Antiochus because they "*know their God*" (**v.32b**). These Jews remained loyal to God by persisting in their obedience to the law of Moses and refusing to compromise the Mosaic covenant by engaging in false worship (cf. 1 Macc 2:16). Since the larger context of the Hebrew resistance to the policies of Antiochus forcing Hellenism on the Jews included martyrdom (**vv.33–35**), Lucas, 287, comments that the reference to those who resist "is best taken as including all forms of resistance to Antiochus's edict, whether it took the form of passive resistance (1 Macc 1:29–38) or of armed revolt (1 Macc 1:42–48)." These faithful Jews faced persecution and the threat of death on two fronts: the military forces of the Seleucid Hellenists occupying Judah, and the turncoat Jews who forced the faithful Israelites to hide in whatever refuge they could find (1 Macc 1:53).

6. (:**33-35**) Persecution of Godly Opposition

a. (:**33**) Heroic Martyrs

"*And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder, for many days.*"

Tremper Longman III: The real heroes during this time of distress are the "*wise*," who will instruct the "*many*" (**v. 33**). They are those who would be on Daniel's religious wavelength.

b. (:**34**) Hypocrisy

"*Now when they fall they will be granted a little help,*
and many will join with them in hypocrisy."

John Whitcomb: They are not going to bring in the kingdom – only Jesus can accomplish that. It will be a mixed multitude. From this group came the **Pharisees** who at the beginning were courageous people standing against Antiochus Epiphanes

and the Syrians who tried to corrupt and destroy the religion of Judaism.

c. **(:35)** Persecution and Refinement until the End Time
"*And some of those who have insight will fall,*
in order to refine, purge, and make them pure, until the end time;
because it is still to come at the appointed time."

Homer Kent: During this period of persecution, a group of godly persons was formed called Hasidaeans, who stood for the law (I Macc. 2:42). Judas Maccabaeus, son of Mattathias, led a successful revolt against the Syrians and brought much relief from persecution. However, his successes (and those of the rest of the Maccabean family) were not permanent. There was still much suffering. Apostates were treated with bloody severity by Judas Maccabaeus.

Stephen Miller: "*Some of the wise will stumble*" expresses the same thought as **v. 33** – true believers will suffer persecution and even martyrdom for their faith. The purpose of this fiery ordeal that fell upon Israel was to cleanse individuals and the nation as a whole of sinful practices and to strengthen their faith. It also separated the true believers form the unregenerate within the Jewish community.

In this context the "*end*" that has been "*appointed*" by the Lord denotes the termination of Antiochus's persecutions. Those suffering in the second century B.C. would have been greatly comforted by the promise of an end to their suffering.

Antiochus IV died in 163 B.C. during an expedition in Persia, bringing to a conclusion both his wicked life and his atrocities against God's people. Antiochus died a horrible death. Polybius relates that according so some the king died insane.

V. (:36-45) CONCERNING ONE GREATER THAN ANTIOCHUS = ULTIMATE ANTICHRIST (THE KING WHO WILL DO AS HE PLEASES)

A. (:36-39) Exaltation and Expansion of Power of the Antichrist in the Last Days

Tremper Longman III: The issue is: **Who is in mind in verses 36–45?** Further complicating the issue is the question of whose "mind" are we referring to, the human author or the divine author? It is our understanding of the nature of revelation (cf. **1 Peter 1:10–12**) that the human author did not fully understand the implications of what he was speaking about. In other words, it is conceivable that Daniel thought he was still describing the climactic king of the north, whom he has been speaking about since **verse 21** and whom we have identified as **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**, but the divine intention may have been much broader.

There are several signals for a **broader intention**.
(1) The language takes on bigger-than-life terms. As Clifford (who does not follow us in assigning an eschatological meaning to these verses) puts it, we get mythical, cosmic language here, that is, language that lifts us above mundane, earthly activity.

(2) We have the language of the "*time of the end*" (**v. 40**). This takes us to the edge of history, which, of course, was not achieved at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, as horrible as his reign was.

(3) Finally, we know that **verses 40–45** simply do not work when applied to the life and death of Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus did not "*extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape*" (**v. 42**). Nor did he die when he "*pitch[ed] his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain*" (**v. 45**).

Stephen Miller: Exegetical necessity requires that **11:36-45** be applied to someone other than Antiochus IV. The context indicates that the ruler now in view will lie in the last days, immediately prior to the coming of the Lord. **Verse 40** reveals that this king's activities will take place "*at the time of the end*" (cf. **10:14**), and the "*time of distress*" mentioned in **12:1** is best understood as the same "*distress*" (the tribulation) predicted by Jesus Christ in **Matt 24:21** as occurring immediately before his second advent (**Matt 24:29-31**; cf. **Rev 7:14**). But the clearest indication that this "*king*" will live in the latter days is that the resurrection of the saints will take place immediately after God delivers his people from this evil individual's power (cf. **12:2**). Of course, the resurrection is an eschatological event. Finally, **vv. 36-39** seem to introduce this king as if for the first time.

Daniel previously had described this person (**chaps. 7** and **9**) and expected the reader to recognize him without an introduction. He is none other than the "*little horn*" of **Dan 7** and "*the ruler who will come*" of **Dan 9:26**. He is known in the New Testament as "*the man of lawlessness*" (**2 Thess 2:3-12**), the "*antichrist*" (**1 John 2:18**), and the "*beast*" (**Rev 11-20**). Interpreting this passage to foretell Antichrist has been a widely accepted view since ancient times (e.g., Chrysostom, Jerome, Theodoret), and Young rightly calls this "the traditional interpretation in the Christian Church." Almost sixteen hundred years ago Jerome declared: "Those of our persuasion believe all these things are spoken prophetically of the Antichrist who is to arise in the end time." Today the majority of both amillennial (e.g., Young) and premillennial (e.g., Archer) scholars interpret this king to be Antichrist. In reality a description of Antichrist should not be considered surprising in a context with Antiochus IV, for both of these oppressors of God's people have previously been given a prominent place in Daniel's prophecies (cf. **chaps. 7-9**). Thus Gabriel had now ceased to speak of Antiochus and had begun to describe the one he closely resembled (or typified), the eschatological Antichrist.

Andrew Hill: The chief problem in assigning an eschatological meaning to the passage is that, unlike the earlier portion of the chapter (e.g., **vv.2, 7, 20–21**), there is no clear grammatical marker or **transitional language** indicating a shift of subject between **v.35** and **v.36** or between **v.39** and **v.40** (cf. Goldingay, 305; Longman, 281). Yet the tendency of biblical prophecy to "**telescope**" future events (or the idea that "the more distant event appears to merge with the nearer so as to become indistinguishable from it" (Baldwin, 202) has already been noted in Daniel (cf. **7:23–25**). Thus Longman, 282, concludes that in **vv.36–45** "we see references to Antiochus Epiphanes taking on larger

than life characteristics, which we, living in the light of the New Testament, might describe as anticipatory of a figure called the **Antichrist**."

John Whitcomb: All of a sudden we are rushed to the end of the world. Daniel didn't know that there would be thousands of years with the church age intervening before these final events. But the Spirit of God understood that.

1. (:**36-37**) His Exaltation
   a. (:**36a**) Magnifying Himself above Every God – Autonomous and Arrogant
      "*Then the king will do as he pleases,*
      and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god,
      and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods;"

John Whitcomb: This king is distinct from the king of the north and of the south.

   b. **(:36b)** Unnatural Prospering during Time of Indignation
      "*and he will prosper until the indignation is finished,*
      for that which is decreed will be done."

   c. (:**37a**) Unnatural Lack of Loyalty and Sexual Perversion
      "*And he will show no regard for the gods of his fathers*
      or for the desire of women,"

   d. (:**37b**) Supreme Prideful Exaltation
      "*nor will he show regard for any other god;*
      for he will magnify himself above them all."

John Whitcomb: This Antichrist must be a Jew – one who shows no regard for the God of his fathers. Maybe he will be a Jew raised in a Gentile environment and be very eloquent and brilliant and highly educated, but with some type of strange emotional characteristics. Look how arrogant he is.

John MacArthur: "*no regard for the desire of women*" – This could mean that Antichrist will be a homosexual; but it surely means he has no normal desire for or, interest in, women, e.g., as one who is celibate.

Tremper Longman: As a king, the **Antichrist** not only has pride, but he also has power, which leads him to assert his own sovereignty so that he will "*do as he pleases*." As such, he attacks the gods. Interestingly, he is castigated not only for rejecting the true God, but also for disdain showed toward his own ancestral religion, perhaps mentioned because it reinforces the idea that he is a man of incredible pride. "*The one desired by women*" is often an epithet of Tammuz, whose cult of the dying and rising god features a prominent place for women, but is more likely the Syrian reflex that features Adonis as the object of attention.

In an apparent contradiction, however, the passage goes on to describe how this king, who exalts himself above every god, pays homage to "*a god of fortresses*" (**v. 38**)—though this may simply be a reference to the attention he pays to his own military machine and his insatiable desire to oppress others. Of course, Antiochus with his lifelong desire to subjugate the south is a suitable model for this bigger-than-life king.

2. (:**38-39**) His Expansion of Power

a. (:**38**) Worshiping Power

"*But instead he will honor a god of fortresses,*
a god whom his fathers did not know;
he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones, and treasures."

John MacArthur: The term for *fortress* is used 5 other times in this chapter (**vv. 7, 10, 19, 31, 39**) and each time means "*a strong place*." **Power** is to be his god, and he spends all his treasures to become powerful and to finance wars. With this power, he will attack every stronghold (**v. 39**).

b. (:**39**) Rewarding Loyal Followers

"*And he will take action against the strongest of fortresses*
with the help of a foreign god;
he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him,
and he will cause them to rule over the many,
and will parcel out land for a price."

John Whitcomb: This "*foreign god*" = Satan himself who operates with his own false prophet in **Rev. 13**.

Andrew Hill: The futurist considers the verse a vague reference to the rewards of political leadership and territorial allotments the antichrist figure will grant to those in league with him (e.g., Miller, 308).

B. (:40-45) Expeditions of the King of the North in the Last Days

Andrew Hill: The futurist interpreter assumes that Daniel alludes to some kind of confederation of modern states as occupying the territories of these archaic biblical kingdoms (cf. Miller, 311). In addition, the futurist approach associates the invasion of Israel by the Antichrist with the prophecies of Ezekiel, Joel, Zechariah, and Revelation concerning the city of Jerusalem (e.g., Archer, 148; Wood, 312–14; Miller, 312; cf. **Eze 39:2–29; Joel 3:2–16; Zec 12:2–9; 13:8–9; 14:1–21; Rev 19:19–20**). The "*boastful king*" will extend his rule into the far reaches of North Africa, including Egypt, Libya, and Nubia (**vv.42–43**).

1. (:**40**) Antichrist Attacked in Pincer Fashion from the South and North

"*And at the end time the king of the South will collide with him,*
and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen, and with many ships;

and he will enter countries, overflow them, and pass through."

2. (:**41**) Antichrist Invades Israel but Spares Israel's Historic Enemies

"*He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall;*
but these will be rescued out of his hand:
Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon."

3. (:**42-43**) Antichrist Enjoys Success against Egypt and Others

"*Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. 43 But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians will follow at his heels.*"

John Whitcomb: This powerful force from the north moves right through the holy land, breaks covenant with Egypt and tries to take over Egypt and surrounding countries. You have to turn to **Rev. 13** to see what happens to the Antichrist at the hands of the king of the north. King of the north goes back into the Holy Land to try to kill the Antichrist again.

4. (:**44-45**) Antichrist's Final Campaigns and Demise

"*But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him,*
and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many.
45 And he will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain;
yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him."

Tremper Longman: Indeed, all I feel safe asserting is the following: **Verses 40–45** look forward to a violent end to history. This end will see the destruction of the pride and arrogance of the wicked. The next section goes on to talk about the other side of the coin, the great eschatological reward for those who are on God's side in the conflict.

John MacArthur: To face the latest threats, the willful king sets up his command post between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea (and/or Sea of Galilee) and the holy mountain of Jerusalem, his troops filling the land (cf. **Zec 12:2, 3; 14:2, 3; Rev 19:17-21**). No one is able to help him against God, who, by the return of Christ, brings him to his end (cf. **Rev 19:20**).

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) On what basis are world events selected to be included in this prophetic survey?

2) How should the precise and detailed fulfillment of these prophecies influence our expectation regarding prophecies that await future fulfillment?

3) How would this prophecy which includes turmoil, persecution and martyrdom for Jewish saints be of any encouragement to Daniel's contemporaries?

4) Why does the prophecy jump so abruptly from Antiochus Epiphanes to the Antichrist in the last days?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

R. A. Torrey: From the preceding verses in this chapter let us learn,

1. That God, in his providence, sets up one and pulls down another, as he pleases.
2. That this world is full of wars and fightings, which result from the indulgence of the lusts of men.
3. That all the changes and revolutions of states were plainly and perfectly foreseen by the God of heaven.
4. That no word of God can fall to the ground, but what he has declared shall infallibly come to pass.

Foundation Institute – **Outline of Daniel 11:1-30**

V. 1 The prophecy is given in 538 B.C.

V. 2 The four kings: Cambyses, pseudo-Smerdis, Darius I, and Xerxes, who was far richer than all and attacked Greece.

V. 3 Alexander the Great defeated Persians at battle of Issus (333) and Arbella (331).

V. 4 Alexander's empire divided between four generals (plus other unimportant divisions):

- Ptolemy took Egypt;
- Cassander took Greece and Macedonia;
- Lycimachus took Syria and Asia Minor;
- Seleucus Nicator took Babylon and territories east.

V. 5 King of South is Ptolemy Soter; "*his prince*" Seleucus Nicator, finally seized Syria in 312 B.C.

V. 6 Marriage between Antiochus II of Syria and Bernice, the daughter of the king of the South. Antiochus' first wife, Laodice, takes vengeance by having Bernice, the Egyptians who attended her, her son (not father – translation problem), and Antiochus killed.

V. 7 Ptolemy III (Euergetes) (320 BC), brother of Bernice, conquers Syria.

V. 8 Ptolemy carries 2400 idols into Egypt as spoil. King of South outlives his rival and peace exists for a time.

V. 9 Summary verse. King of South attacked Syria (**verses 7 & 8**) then because of sedition in Egypt returns home.

V. 10 Of two sons of Seleucus II, one – Antiochus the Great – invaded Syria, Palestine and concluded a treaty. Renews war in 217 B.C. and attacked Raphia, near Gaza, a fortress on the border of Egypt.

V. 11 Ptolemy IV (Philopater) of Egypt defeated the king of the North at Raphia.

V. 12 Philopater annexes Palestine to Egypt, but makes a rash treaty with Syria which dissipates victory. Philopater persecutes thousands of Jews in the city of Alexandria because he was struck with paralysis when trying to enter Temple at Jerusalem (see 3 Maccabees).

V. 13 King of North – Antiochus III (the Great)--after 14 years assembles great army to conquer Egypt which has a weak king.

V. 14 Syrians make treaty with Philip of Macedon against Egypt. Wealthy Jews who fled to Egypt to build a temple there rebel against Egypt when Syria commences invasion. Jews suffer (see Josephus). (The "*vision*" is found in **Isaiah 19:18-25**).

V. 15 Antiochus, momentarily occupied by attack from Pergamum, again attacks Egypt in 198 and defeats Egyptians ally Scopas at Paneas (Banias) and retakes Palestine.

V. 16 All of Palestine under the power of Syrians under Antiochus the Great.

V. 17 Antiochus plans to conquer Egypt by trickery. His daughter Cleopatra given in marriage to Ptolemy Epiphanes. This "deal" had appearance of uprightness or equal conditions, but it failed. Cleopatra aided her husband against her father.

V. 18 Antiochus invades Asia Minor and takes Aegean Islands. Roman general Scipio Asiaticus, 190, causes Syrian reproach to Rome to return on itself – Antiochus overwhelmingly defeated at battle of Magnesia.

V. 19 Antiochus, after returning to Antioch – a fortress – is murdered at Elymais for plundering the temple of Belus in order to pay a Roman indemnity (187 BC).

V. 20 Heliodorus sent by Seleucus IV as tax collector. Seleucus, after reign of 11 years, is poisoned by Heliodorus.

V. 21 Vile person: Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) takes throne by treachery in 176.

V. 22 Collects armies who quell foes. Onias, high priest, replaced by Jason.

V. 23 Antiochus Epiphanes deals deceitfully with Rome and with High Priest. Jason now replaced with Menelaus. (Antiochus is type of the final "beast" in Europe.)

V. 24 Antiochus distributes wealth; issues threats; uses propaganda.

V. 25 Antiochus Epiphanes reduces Egypt in four campaigns beginning in 173. "*Devise plans*": bribery and propaganda.

V. 26 Ptolemy Philometor of Egypt is betrayed to Syrians and made prisoner in guise of friendship because conqueror and prisoner are uncle and nephew. Egyptians in Alexandria make Ptolemy's brother king

V. 27 Uncle (Antiochus) and brother of king (Euergetes II) sat at a banquet table each try to deceive the other.

V. 28 Antiochus returns with plunder and persecutes Jews who rejoiced upon hearing false report that Antiochus died (2 Maccabees 1:19-20).

V. 29 King of North returns to Egypt when brothers learn of uncle's treachery. Romans demand withdrawal. Rome makes Egypt a protectorate.

V. 30 Ships of Kittim ("*western lands*"): Roman fleet. Renegade Jews join with Gentile Syrians to destroy what remained of true religion in Palestine.
https://foundationinstitute.org/uploads/FI_Online_Daniel_Insert_Handout.pdf

David Thompson: **Daniel 11:1-45**
GOD IS SOVEREIGNLY WORKING OUT HIS PLAN AND HIS PROGRAM IN PRESENT AND FUTURE HISTORY, SPECIFICALLY AS IT RELATES TO ISRAEL, AND EVEN THOUGH NEGATIVE THINGS ARE PERMITTED TO HAPPEN, EVENTUALLY IT WILL END POSITIVELY FOR ISRAEL WHEN JESUS CHRIST COMES TO REIGN.

The expression "*time of the end*" (**v. 35**) is a key transitional expression which goes from Antiochus to the Antichrist. Here is what you have–you have a world of political deceit, violence, greed, lust and war. You have powerful people who crave wealth and power and who will walk over anyone to get it, specifically God's people. There were murders committed and even relatives killed. One would think God could never be in any of this, but He was right in the middle of it. God is the God of things past, present and future. Notice this is all heading to an end (**Daniel 11:35**). People may think they are getting away with their rebellion, but it will come to an end, literally and specifically, just as God predicts.

There is, in the Bible, a description of an individual who is predicted to rise to power as a satanic masterpiece, who will have many amazing characteristics:

1) He will be very intelligent.

2) He will have great speaking ability.
3) He will be a crafty politician who is able to unite Europe, in fact the whole world.
4) He will have strong physical appearance.
5) He will be a military genius.
6) He will appear to have a real caring interest in Israel.
7) He will be very immoral.
8) He will be a God-hater and God-mocker, but he will initially give the impression he believes in God.
9) He will do the miraculous and be empowered by Satan.

We come here in Daniel to one of the most amazing biblical prophecies you will ever see in the entire Bible and it has to do with the Antichrist. Up to this point, we have seen prophecies which have been very specifically fulfilled by Babylon, Persia, Greece and even, in part, by Rome. But now we come to a prophecy which has never, ever been precisely fulfilled. But you may be certain there will come a specific fulfillment and that specific fulfillment will occur when God orders and permits the events of the Antichrist to occur. It will be these final events that will lead to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

DANIEL IS GIVEN A SPECIFIC DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTER AND WORK OF THE ANTICHRIST SO THAT GOD'S PEOPLE MAY KNOW AND BE ENCOURAGED THAT EVENTUALLY THIS DIABOLICAL LEADER WILL COME TO HIS END.

The career and destiny of the Antichrist is completely set up by God. There is a great gap of time between **verse 35** and **verse 36**. The events predicted in **Daniel 11:1-35** have been fulfilled, but the events predicted beginning at **verse 36** are yet to be fulfilled. When these events occur, a key world figure will take center stage. This world figure is the **Antichrist**.

Daniel 11:36 – The Antichrist will do as he pleases all over the world.

1) He will do as he pleases concerning himself. **11:36a**–no restraints, total dictator

2) He will do as he pleases concerning God. **11:36b**–he will be a blasphemer of the true God

3) He will do as he pleases in prosperity. **11:36c**–he will flourish in every way with great wealth

The reason the Antichrist is permitted to do all of this is so that God's timing of indignation may be filled. God has decreed that a certain amount of horrific things will happen to His people in view of His anger for her sins (i.e. **Ezekiel 39:21-29**). He has specifically decreed this until such time as His indignation is finished.

Daniel 11:37 – The Antichrist will show no regard for anyone but himself .

1) He has no respect for religious heritage. 11:37a
Some have said "*gods of his fathers*" proves the Antichrist is Jewish. However, the word gods is not LORD God of fathers, which is so frequently used pertaining to the God of Israel. The phrase "*gods of fathers*" refer to various gods fathers believed in. It seems to me that he will have been raised in some religious home, which probably taught him to respect all religions. But no religious upbringing will influence him. In other words, the Antichrist will dismiss all religion but that of himself. The Apostle Paul predicted that the Antichrist would oppose every so-called god or object of worship (**II Thessalonians 2:4**).

2) He has no respect for desire of women. 11:37b
There are three possibilities as to what this means and all three may be true:

A) This may mean he has no regard for Jewish women at all, even if they are pregnant. **Matthew 24:19**–He will kill Jewish women even if they are pregnant. The Lacey Petersen law will mean nothing to him. He is his own law.

B) It also may mean that he will not listen to or be drawn to any woman. He may have homosexual tendencies and actually be a homosexual.

C) It also may mean that the desire of Jewish women for the coming Messiah will mean absolutely nothing to him.

3) He will magnify himself. 11:37c
This man will deify himself as God and demand he be worshipped as God. This is clearly predicted by Paul that he will sit in the Temple of God and display himself as God (II Thessalonians 2:4).

Daniel 11:38 – The Antichrist will honor and worship war and all it gets him.

Dr. Renald Showers said whatever a man devotes himself to, including his abilities, his efforts, his time and his resources–that is his "*god*" (p. 165). For the Antichrist, his god is war. He will use his own wealth to promote war. The writer of Hebrews says that believers are to "*pursue peace with all men*" (**Hebrews 12:14**); the Antichrist will pursue war with all men.

Daniel 11:39 – The Antichrist will go to war against the strongest of military powers.

1) He will give great honor to those powers who follow him and put them in charge of places he conquers.

2) He will redivide the world. He will parcel out land. Those who unite with him in his one world government will temporarily share the wealth.

3) He is empowered by a foreign god who is none other than Satan.

Daniel 11:40 – The Antichrist will be attacked from a king from the South and a king from the North.

Notice how **verse 40** begins, this all happens as things begin to move toward the end time. Now the coordinates of North and South are given in regard to the Promised Land. In the context, the king of the South would be Egypt (**11:8, 42**) and the North would be Syria. Although some believe the king of the North is Russia, we think contextually this is Syria.

Russia will play a role at the end (**Ezekiel 38-39**), but she comes from the "*far north*." At the beginning of the Tribulation the Antichrist will enter into a peace agreement with Israel (**Daniel 9:27**). He will permit the rebuilding of the Temple and also the reestablishing of Jewish worship. Now notice carefully the prepositional phrase "*at the end time*." This is a reference to the time of Jacob's trouble that will lead to the end. There apparently is going to be a Syrian and Egyptian attack against Israel. When the Antichrist learns that Israel is under attack, he will leave his European headquarters and pass through many countries on his way to the Beautiful Land. He controls ten kings (**Revelation 17:12-13**) and they will initially target several Arab and Islamic countries (**Revelation 17:15-18**). It will be this military threat that will bring the Antichrist to Jerusalem, which eventually starts all final matters, which culminates in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Daniel 11:41 – The Antichrist will enter the Promised Land of Israel.

When the Antichrist learns that Israel has been attacked, he will rush to her aid. He appears to support Israel and on his way, as he moves from north to south, he will take over many countries. God will use the Antichrist to crush Arab powers who have so humiliated and dominated Israel (**Isaiah 10:24-25; 14:24-27**). God has put this military action in their hearts (**Revelation 17:17**). In the wake of his journey from Europe to the Middle East, many countries will fall, including many Arab nations. But God is clear to point out that some will also be rescued out of his hand. In other words, there will be some countries that can serve to house the Jews once the Antichrist turns against them.

Daniel 11:42 – The Antichrist will go to war against other countries.

It appears that as he first comes down through Israel, he is focused on going to Egypt and North Africa. He apparently moves from Syria to Egypt and does not conquer those powers east of the Jordan. He will move against more than just Israel; he will drop down into Egypt and on into Northern Africa.

Daniel 11:43 – The Antichrist will gain control over the treasures of many Arab nations.

He will strike Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia. Apparently, he will totally conquer Egypt

(**Isaiah 31:1-3**), but not Libya and Ethiopia because they will, in fact, chase him. The phrase "*follow at heels*" may mean they submit to the Antichrist or they chase the Antichrist. What ultimately enables them to chase him is that he turns around and it is the next fact that causes him to turn around.

Daniel 11:44 – The Antichrist will learn of rumors of major powers moving against him.

The Antichrist will learn some very disturbing news–there are powers coming to get him. Powers from the east, probably a massive 200 million man army coming from the direction of China (**Revelation 9:13-16**) and he will also hear of movement from the north. Probably rumors that Russia (**Ezekiel 38-39**) is coming after him will cause him to turn around and start pouring out wrath on any power. It is interesting that God will stop Russia Himself. Russia will move into Israel, but God Himself will strike her down (**Ezekiel 38:18 – 39:8**). But with world powers heading to Jerusalem, the stage is set for the Battle of Armageddon.

Daniel 11:45 – The Antichrist will pitch his tents in Israel's Promised Land and will come to his end.

By the time the Antichrist gets to Jerusalem, God has already dropped Russia, so the Antichrist will be able to say that he has divine power. He will make Jerusalem his headquarters. "*Between the Seas*" refers to the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. The Holy Mountain refers to Jerusalem and the mount on which the Temple stands. The Antichrist will set himself in Jerusalem and demand that he be worshipped. He will put a statue of himself in the Holy of Holies and demand that people worship him (**Revelation 13:15**).

But it is here where the Antichrist will come to his end (**Ezekiel 38:22-23**). You see, he has made his headquarters the very area from which Jesus Christ will reign. And Jesus Christ will come back Personally and cast him into hell (**Revelation 19:20**). In the end, no matter how rich or powerful one may be, they lose because they must face Jesus Christ.
https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/519121527311.pdf

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **The Amazing Prophecy of Daniel (11:1-10)**
Introduction: Remarkable accumulation of detailed prophecies.
The greatest evidence of the sovereignty of God = fulfilled prophecy. **Is. 46:9; 41:22; 44:7**

I. The Prophecy of Ahasuerus – 11:1
In the government of Persia, there's going to be three kings to follow the king who is on the throne right now. Remember, Daniel is in Babylon. And then there'll be a fourth one. And this fourth one will be different. He says that this one will be rich. He'll have riches. And by his strength and through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece. There was a fourth by the name of Xerxes, or he's also called Ahasuerus. He

is the same king that we see in the book of Esther. He is a very volatile king. He was very wealthy, the most wealthy of the four. And he did stir up people against the realm of Greece. In fact, history records what we now know as the Greco-Persian War of Xerxes, and that happened in 480 to 479. And so he had fabulous wealth. He had a huge army. He had a huge navy. He attacked Greece, but he was soundly defeated.

II. The Prophecy of Alexander the Great

He retaliated against the Persians because of their incursions against Greece. He was a man of great dominion, according to verse 3. That was so true. Perhaps no other ruler or conqueror impacted history the way Alexander the Great impacted history. He was an absolute monarch. He had a powerful personality. He was a man of great military skill and strategy. And he was able to do according to his will, just like it says here in verse number three. Notice the division of his empire. It says in verse four that when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken. That is, no sooner will he rise to power, but his kingdom will be broken.

He had a half brother who was mentally retarded. He had an illegitimate child. He had a baby born after his death. They were all murdered. And what happened was there was a struggle for power until finally his kingdom was divided into four.

III. The Prophecy of the Alliance – 11:5

When it's talking about the king of the south here, it's talking about Alexander, the great general Ptolemy.

11:5-20 – conflict between the king of the north and the king of the south

He has a rival king, the king of the north, and that is Seleucius, the king of Syria. And so there's a rivalry that's going on. They're going to make an alliance [a peace agreement sealed by marriage] . But verse six says it's not going to last.

Ptolemy who was the king of the south had a daughter by the name of Bernice and he decided to give her in marriage to Antiochus Theos who was the king of the north the king of Syria at this time Antiochus Theos that means Antiochus the God you think that guy had an ego problem. Antiochus agreed to marry the daughter of Ptolemy and bring peace. However, there was one small detail. You know what it was? Antiochus was already married. Problem. Well, that was no problem for Antiochus. He simply divorced his first wife to marry the daughter of the king of Egypt.

However, the marriage didn't produce any lasting peace, according to history. And when Ptolemy, the king of the south, died, Antiochus divorced Bernice, the daughter of the king of the south. And then he took back his first wife. Now his first wife was named Laodice. And Laodice, she didn't think that everything was settled. She was still angry about this whole deal. So you know what she did? After Antiochus took back his first wife, Laodice, she murdered Bernice. And then she murdered her son, Bernice's son. And then she murdered Bernice's attendants. And she still wasn't satisfied. She was still angry at her husband, Antiochus. So you know what she did to him? She gave him poison. And she killed him as well. And so those murders brought Laodice's son, Seleucius II, to the throne. And by doing all that, she completely fulfilled the prophecy

of verse number six, where it says, but she shall be given up. That is the daughter of the king of the South. Bernice will be given up.

There's a retaliation in verse seven. But out of out of a branch of her roots, Now, who's the her there? This again is Bernice, the daughter of the King of the South. Shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army and shall enter into the fortress of the King of the North and shall deal against them and shall prevail. So what's the prophecy here? The prophecy is, is that there would be one who would avenge the death of Bernice. Now, who would this be? Well, it would be a branch of her roots. That is, it would be someone from her family line. Someone would from her family would avenge her death. That's the prophecy here Well, what happened according to history? Well Bernice had a brother and her brother's name was Ptolemy the third and he was now the king of Egypt and at the time of Bernice's murder He came with an army just like the Bible says here in verse number seven to defeat the new king of Syria And verse 8 says, as a result of the angel's statement, that he would carry captive into Egypt their gods with their princes and with their precious vessels of silver and gold. And ladies and gentlemen, all of that came true. History records that Ptolemy returned to Egypt with hundreds of idol statues and thousands of talents in silver. It all happened just like the Bible says would happen.

Why does God give us such detailed prophecy with explicit fulfillment?

- To strengthen our faith
- To demonstrate His sovereignty
- To express His love

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **A Chronology of Christless Conquerors (11:11-35)**
Introduction: You can divide Daniel chapter 11 into two divisions. Number one, there is the division of prophecy already fulfilled. When you go to Daniel 11 from verses 1 down to verse number 35, all of the detailed prophecies that are given there have already been fulfilled. But something happens when you get from verse 35 to the end of the chapter. We find no recorded history of any of that being fulfilled. So that is yet to come. That is something that will be fulfilled in the future.

IV. The Prophecy of Antiochus Epiphanes = foreshadowing of Antichrist
This is Antiochus IV. He's called the Little Horn of chapter 8. And you might be asking yourself, why is the Bible giving such attention to this guy? I mean, why so much attention? Well, I think two reasons. First of all, because his actions profoundly affected Israel in the history of Israel. I mean, this man really had a profound impact upon that nation. And second, because I think he is a foreshadowing of another ruler who is to come. And that is someone that we know as the Antichrist.

A. His Craftiness – 11:21
Antiochus is a master of political intrigue. He won support for his government by influencing key figures in Syria. He promised people things. He made all kind of promises, attractive rewards, if they would just cooperate with him.

B. His Confrontations – 11:25-28

- Successful conflict with Egypt
- Conflict with Rome – **11:29**; humiliated
- Poured out his anger on the Jews in Palestine

C. His Cruelty – 11:31

He sent Apollonius, who was his head mercenary and his chief tax collector. He sent him with his soldiers to Jerusalem. Antiochus didn't go himself. He sent him. And Apollonius pretended to be coming in peace. He pretended to be there on a Sabbath day with the people. But when the people began to worship there on the Sabbath. Apollonius turned against the people suddenly. He attacked them. He massacred so many people. He plundered the city.

And this guy really hates Israel. He hates the people of God. They don't just massacre people, they plunder the temple. All religious practices had to cease. No circumcision, no possession of scripture, no worship. All of this was forbidden under the penalty of death. No sacrifices, no feast days. And what he did was he introduced to the people the imperial cult and he placed an idol in the temple and the Holy of Holies. This was total sacrilege. This was incredible blasphemy. The image that he placed in there was an image of Jupiter (Zeus). And he also offered sacrifices on the altar, but they were swine, pig, which again, polluted, totally polluted the sanctuary of God. And so this was just an incredible offense to the Jewish people.

But look at the end of verse 32. *But the people that do know their God shall be strong and shall do exploits.* Who's this referring to? This is referring to a remnant of Jews. who are faithful, godly during this time. The Bible says these are people that know their God. All the while this horrendous persecution is going on, there's a remnant of faithful, godly people who will not bow, who will not eat the meat of a pig, who will not allow these things to go on without trying to do something.

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **The Coming of the Antichrist**

Introduction: Antichrist is the notorious tyrant who will come, the most vicious and cruel leader that the world will ever know. He will be all the evil power of Ahasuerus, Alexander, Antioch the Great, Antiochus Epiphanes, and all these Christless conquerors that we have studied here in chapter 11 -- He will be all of those men rolled up into one. He'll be worse than all of them.

I. The Chronology of His Coming – 11:36

When you get to verse 36, We're not talking about Antiochus Epiphanes anymore. Now we're talking about the Antichrist.

1) The phrase "*the time of the end*" -- this is an eschatological term, we could say. It's referring to a time that is later than the time that was given there in previous verses
   The time of trouble (**12:1**) is a reference to the tribulation period
2) The scope of prophecy – stretches beyond the Persian and Greek Empires
3) The historical record – we find no record of historical fulfillment of these events

4) The timing of God's final judgment – "indignation" / wrath of God
   Is. 26:20-21; 27:1 – talking about God punishing Satan in the end time
5) The resurrection following the king's death
6) Similarity of description in previous contexts
7) Widely accepted view adopted by the early church

II. The Character of His Coming

A. His Power – 11:36

Does whatever he wants. All the governments of the world will be submitted to him. They'll be in harmony with him.

B. His Pride – 11:36

This man will be satanically controlled or possessed. What has Satan wanted from the very beginning? He's wanted to be as God. He's wanted to be worshiped as God. Cf. Hitler -- you're going to find out that the whole Third Reich was dominated by the occult.

C. His Profanity – 11:36

The Antichrist will spew out shockingly blasphemous things against Christ. **Rev. 13:6**

D. His Preeminence – 11:37

Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers. --
He will not be a Jewish person. I think that it indicates to us that he will be a Gentile, that he'll come out of the Roman world. He will reject the religion of his ancestors in Europe. That may indicate to us, then, that the religion that he rejects will be some form of Christianity, because Christianity has been the dominant religion through the ages in Europe. And so I think that what this is speaking about, then, is that he will reject all of Christianity

nor will he have the desire of women. --
Homosexual??
What was the desire of all Jewish women? What did they want? What did they desire? Cf. **Haggai 2:7** -- Now, what was the glory that he was speaking of? It's not the glory of money. It's not the glory of riches. It was the glory of the Messiah himself. It was the glory of the Messiah that will one day come to that house. There's a sense in which every Jewish mother desired to bear the Messiah. They wanted to be the mother of the Messiah. The Antichrist will have no regard for the Messiah.

Look at the next expression in verse 37. It says, *For he shall magnify himself above all*, nor, excuse me, nor regard any God. Look at that phrase first. For he shall magnify himself above all. Here's another expression of his relationship to religion. He will not regard any God. He will magnify himself above all gods. You see, the Antichrist will reject all religions. This makes better sense to me because the first expression is an expression about his relationship to religion. He'll reject the God of his ancestors. The last phrase we know is an expression about religion. He'll not regard any gods. It only makes sense in the context that the middle expression, the desire of women, is

another phrase that speaks about his relationship to worship and religion.

E. His Paganism – 11:38
What he's talking about is the idea of taking control with force, with power, with military might, with intimidation. He will worship the God of fortresses. What God or religion expands today by military force or intimidation? That's the question you ask yourself. Now, can Daniel, and here's a question I came across in researching this, can Daniel be prophesying a connection between **Islam** and the Antichrist? The Muslims then are looking for a Messiah-like figure called the Mahdi who will lead them to victory, who will give final victory over Israel and America and over the rest of the world. Muslims are taking over Europe. It's because the population of the Muslims is exploding, I should say, over in Europe. The projected demographic by the year 2025 is that the world population will be 25% Christian and 30% Muslim.

III. The Conflict that will happen at His Coming – 11:40
There's going to be an invasion from the South. A revolution will arise against the Antichrist. You see, he'll be holding a global empire together, and that's kind of a difficult thing to do. And at some point along the line, there'll be someone who will revolt against him. And we see here who it will be, the king of the South. You say, who is that? That'll be someone who will bring an army out of Africa. That's an attempt to control the strategic Middle East. And the Hebrew word for push there comes from a word meaning to push like a goat.

But there will also be an invasion from the north. and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind. Who would this be? This would refer, I think, to the area now occupied by Russia, which also desires to control the Middle East. So you have these two forces pushing against him. Verse 41, and he shall enter into the glorious land, that is, the land of Israel, and many countries shall be overthrown. But these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom and Moab and the chief of the children of Ammon." In other words, the Antichrist will go, he'll meet those forces, he'll overflow them, he'll conquer them. These lands will be spared in that.

Rev. 9:16 -- This passage describes an army that will come from the east of Israel, a human army perhaps, maybe even from communist China. And so he will come against them and he will have victory. So the Antichrist will be riding high. He'll put down these rebellions. He'll put down these revolts. But there will be one battle that he won't win. Look at verse 44 again. In other words, he'll set up shop right there in the Holy Land, right there in Jerusalem. And I think this will be the time when he really is drunk with power. After establishing himself, after having great military victories, he will establish himself in Jerusalem. He'll declare himself God. Again, he'll be drunk with success and power. He'll demand to be worshipped as God. He'll persecute the Jewish people. This is when all the atrocities that he has been prophesied will do will come to pass. But then the final thing will be that Daniel gives us, *yet he shall come to his end. and none shall help him*.

Christ will reign victorious. He will set up his throne in Jerusalem. And there we will

reign with Christ. He will reign for a thousand years on the throne of David. And that will be the beginning of millennial bliss. But the Antichrist will be put down.

Dr. Jerry Harmon: **The Condemnation of the Antichrist – Rev. 19**
Introduction: I wanted to spend a little bit more time talking about the conflict of his coming. There's going to be at the end a conflict that the Antichrist will have with other nations in the world for a time. He will dominate the world and he will persuade others to come in together with him. But that that alliance is going to be a fragile alliance and it will fall apart. Revelation gives us the full story of what will happen in the end when Christ comes back against the Antichrist. There will be a war and Christ will defeat him and Revelation chapter 19 kind of gives us the picture of that.

It opens with a wedding and it ends with a war. It opens up with the marriage of the lamb and it ends with a massacre when Christ comes against the Antichrist. Let me give you a few reasons why they're celebrating:

1) Full salvation has come at this time; the great voice in heaven probably refers to angels
2) Justice will be provided
3) The rebellion has ended
4) God reigns
5) The marriage of the lamb is complete

What was the Jewish wedding like . . . the third stage of the marriage is the celebrating.

Description of Armageddon.

TEXT: Daniel 12:1-3

TITLE: FINAL DELIVERANCE AND REWARD OF GOD'S PEOPLE ISRAEL

BIG IDEA:
THE CLIMAX OF GOD'S PROGRAM FOR ISRAEL INVOLVES
- **RESCUE FROM SEVERE TRIBULATION,**
- **RESURRECTION TO ETERNAL LIFE AND**
- **REWARD FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE**

INTRODUCTION:

Stephen Miller: **Verse 1** also relates the final deliverance of the saints, followed in **vv. 2-3** with an account of their glorious condition in the messianic kingdom.

Norman Porteous: The first four verses of **chapter 12** are the completion of the long section which began with **chapter 10**. They give in remarkably brief compass and restrained language the writer's expectation of what the divinely appointed end would be like. It would be climax of which Israel would be the centre, as is shown by the fact that Michael, the patron angel of Israel, is to play the decisive part on God's behalf. The great tribulation will come to a head but Israel will escape, all those in Israel, that is to say, whose names are written in the book of life (**Ps. 69:29; Ex. 32:32**; cf. the later passages **Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5**). **God already knows His own.**

John Walvoord: Added to the previous revelation are the important disclosures
(1) that the time of the end has a special relationship to "*the children of thy people*," that is, Israel,
(2) that Israel will experience at that time a **special deliverance** to be realized by those in Israel who worship God, and
(3) that the **doctrine of resurrection** which climaxes the time of the end is the special hope of those who are martyred.

There is no precedent to this end-time trouble. Even liberal expositors find it impossible to harmonize **Daniel 12:1** with the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century B.C. As Keil has observed,

> *…the contents of ver. 1 do not agree with the period of persecution under Antiochus. That which is said regarding the greatness of the persecution is much too strong for it… Though the oppression which Antiochus brought upon Israel may have been most severe, yet it could not be said of it without exaggeration, that it was such a tribulation as never had been from the beginning of the world. Antiochus, it is true, sought to outroot Judaism root and branch, but Pharaoh also wished to do the same by his command to destroy all the Hebrew male children at their birth; and as Antiochus wished to make the worship of the Grecian Zeus, so also Jezebel the worship of the Phoenician Hercules, in the place of the worship of Jehovah, the national religion in Israel.*

I. (:1) RESCUE FROM SEVERE TRIBULATION

A. Supreme Defender of Israel = Michael

"*Now at that time Michael,*
the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise."

Bethany Bible: The word "*at*" (the Hebrew preposition *be*) can be translated "*in*" or "*during*"--which would then indicate that the events that follow describe what is occurring while the Antichrist is still active--though very close to "*his end*" (**11:45**). It is during this time that Michael (the archangel described in **10:13** and **21** as "*the prince*" who ministers to the people of Israel) shall "*stand up*" or "*shall arise*" (*`amad*). This may mean that he arises to come to the aid of the people of Israel in a unique way. But the same word can also be translated "*to stand still*" or "*to cease*" (as in **Josh. 10:28**); thus suggesting that Michael ceases his unique work of protection for a time at the command of God, and allows the events of the Great Tribulation to unfold (an event possibly being described in **2 Thessalonians 2:6-7**).

Note that Michael's action is immediately followed by commencement of the Great Tribulation. The description of this event matches that of our Lord's in **Matthew 24:15-22**--that is, a time "*such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be*" (**Matthew 24:21**). It will, however, result in the Jewish people being "*delivered, everyone who is found written in the book*" (see **Psalm 56:8; 69:28; Rev. 20:12, 15**).
https://www.bethanybible.org/biblestudy/2007/pm/061307.htm

John MacArthur: What happens is Michael stands up to **defend the people of God**. He has a war in heaven and he wins the victory. Satan is no longer the prince of the power of the air, he is no longer in heavenly places. He is cast to the earth. The major battle is over. While he's only got a short time here, he overruns the earth. He does everything he can to destroy the people of Israel. But they are protected for a time, times and half a time, for twelve hundred and sixty days, both indicating three and a-half years. They're protected for that time. And when his army goes out to try to destroy them, the ground opens up and they're all swallowed.

B. Unprecedented Tribulation for Israel

"*And there will be a time of distress*
such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time;"

Stephen Miller: Daniel was therefore predicting that at the end of the age there will be "*a time of distress*" unlike anything experienced in the history of the world. Michael will be needed to help deliver Israel during this trying period. Israel will also require the assistance of such a mighty angel because Antichrist will be energized by a powerful evil angel, Satan himself (cf. **2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:2**).

This "*time of distress*" is commonly labeled "*the great tribulation*" and will be the most

horrible period in history for Israel and the whole world. According to **Zech 13:8**, only one-third of the people of Israel will survive. Not only will this period involve persecution for those who oppose Antichrist, but as **Dan 11:40-45** has informed the reader, this will be a time of great wars climaxed by Armageddon.

Thomas Constable: This period generally will be a time of extreme distress for the Jews, worse than any other time in their national history (cf. **Deuteronomy 4:30; Jeremiah 30:7; Matthew 24:21; Revelation 6-19**). Showers argued that the Day of the Lord, the Time of Jacob's Trouble, and the Great Tribulation are all terms that Scripture uses to describe a three and one-half year period of intense trouble yet future, namely, the last half of Daniel's seventieth week. [Note: Showers, pp. 40-43.] I agree, though the term "*the Day of the Lord*" refers to other times as well (i.e., the seven-year Tribulation, the Millennium, both periods together, and other times at which God breaks into history dramatically). The repetition of "*your people*" in this verse clearly identifies the **Jews**, not all believers. They will be the focus of intense persecution, though many non-Jews will also suffer, and Israel's land will become an international battlefield (cf. **Matthew 24:22**).

C. Purged Israel Delivered

> "*and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.*"

Andrew Hill: The figurative reference to "*the book*" is usually equated with "*the book of life*," in which all the saints are enrolled (cf. **Ex 32:33; Ps 69:28; Mal 3:16; Php 4:3; Rev 3:5; 20:12**).

Thomas Constable: "*The book*" probably contains the names of all the Jews living in that region then who will experience physical deliverance (cf. **Revelation 12:13-17**). The figure of a book connotes a divine record, written beforehand, that is the basis for this rescue. There are several books that God keeps (**Revelation 20:12**; cf. **Exodus 32:33; Psalms 69:28; Malachi 3:16; Luke 10:20; Revelation 20:15**; et al.)

Dan Duncan: The idea of the book with names written in it comes from the ancient practice of keeping a record of all the citizens of a city. They'd be registered in an official book, and those who had citizenship, whose names were in the city register or in the book enjoyed the privileges and protection of that town or city. And that's true of every saint; that's true of every believer, everyone who's name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. We are citizens of heaven and we are under the constant care of the government of heaven.

John MacArthur: Now listen. **Who is the all Israel that will be saved**? Well, in the end time, first during the testing period, the apostates and the rebels will be purged out. Only the remaining ones will be protected. **Zechariah 13:8** says two-thirds will die. That leaves one-third purged as the remnant. That one-third purged then becomes the duly constituted nation, they are the all Israel, they are the Israel that's promised redemption, the godly remnant. As **Revelation chapter 12** in **verse 17** tells us, they are

the ones protected by God who affirm their relationship to Him. "*And the dragon was angry with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed*." What remnant? "*Those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*." It is against them that the attack is made.

So, I really believe that when it says thy people shall be delivered, it does not make a blanket statement that every Jew alive on the earth is going to be saved at that time. What it is saying is that God is going to purge, He's going to put them under the rod, He's going to test them, two-thirds of them will die. One-third will be protected for they are the ones who obey the commandments of God and keep the testimony of Jesus Christ. . .

So, the deliverance is two-fold. It is a deliverance of personal salvation. But it happens on a wide enough scale and God protects those that are redeemed so that it becomes a national deliverance, as a duly constituted remnant of believing Jews become the all Israel that is saved. This, beloved, is Israel's hope. The purging will someday be over. The nation will be saved and ushered into the long-awaited and long-promised Kingdom. Now that special deliverance leads to, fourthly, a special destiny.

II. (:2) RESURRECTION TO ETERNAL LIFE – CONTRAST IN RESURRECTION DESTINY

A. One Dramatic Event Event

"*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake,*"

W. A. Criswell: Why does he use the word *many*? Why doesn't he use word "all," for he means all? But he uses the word "*many*." There are <u>two reasons</u> for that word "many."

- First, there are many that shall arise. That is **in contrast to the few** who shall be alive at the coming of the Lord. When the Lord comes, any day, any time, the living will be comparatively few in number. It is the dead who shall be the great, vast, multitudinous, innumerable throng—the "*many*" who are asleep in the earth, compared to the "*few*" who shall be alive to the coming of the Lord.
- And that word "*many*" refers to another thing. It is a **partial resurrection**, always. It is a fractional resurrection; that is, **they are not all raised at the same time.**

John Walvoord: What is presented here is that those who have died will be raised from the dead to join those living in this period of restoration. Israelites who survive the tribulation and who are the objects of the divine deliverance prophesied in **Romans 11:26** will be joined by the Old Testament saints who are raised from the dead. This will occur after the great tribulation, at the second coming of Christ. Actually, there is no passage in Scripture which teaches that the Old Testament saints will be raised at the time the church is raptured, that is, before the final tribulation. It is preferable, therefore, to consider their resurrection as occurring at the same time as the restoration of the living nation with the result that resurrected Israel and those still in their natural

bodies who are delivered at the second coming of Christ will join hands and ministries in establishing Israel in the land in the millennial kingdom which follows the second advent. Accordingly, the exegesis of this passage which interprets it as revealing an actual resurrection at the time of the second coming of Christ is preferable. At the same time, those who have died in the great tribulation just preceding will also be raised as taught in **Revelation 20:4-6**. . .

The problem arises, however, in that the passage states that the resurrection will extend to "*some to shame and everlasting contempt*." Here, premillenarians appeal to the clear distinction provided in **Revelation 20** which states, after revealing the resurrection of the righteous, "*But the rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection*" (**v. 5**). The resurrection of the wicked, the second resurrection, is revealed in **Revelation 20:12-13**. If the resurrection of **Revelation 20:5** and that of **20:12-13** are actual resurrections, fulfilling the prophecy of the resurrection of **Daniel 12**, it makes very clear that there will be more than one resurrection. The confident assertion of amillenarians such as Leupold that, "A dual resurrection is taught nowhere in the Scriptures" is a judgment which ignores **obvious distinctions** in the Bible.

B. Two Different Destinies

1. Resurrection to Everlasting Life

"*these to everlasting life,*"

2. Resurrection to Everlasting Disgrace and Contempt

"*but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.*"

Stephen Miller: Although the spirit of the believer does not sleep, the body is placed in a grave ("*the dust of the earth*"; cf. **Gen 3:19**) and becomes inactive (sleeps) until the Lord raises it, glorifies it, and reunites it with the spirit (cf. **1 Cor 15:51-55**). Deceased unbelievers also will be resurrected and spend eternity in bodily form according to this verse (cf. **Matt 10:28**). The resurrection of the body is compared here to a person waking from sleep.

Two groups of resurrected persons with drastically different futures are represented in this verse (cf. **John 5:28-29**). Believers will rise to enjoy "everlasting life" in their new bodies and will reign with Christ (cf. **Rev 20:4-6**). . . On the other hand, unbelievers will face "*shame*" and "*contempt*." The wicked will be ashamed and disgraced as they stand before the Lord and realize the gravity of their sin, particularly the sin of rejecting God's loving Messiah. . . So shocking will be the fate of thel ost that onlookers must turn their faces in horror (or disgust). This "contempt" will be "*everlasting*," that is, it will endure for eternity. . .

At first glance one might receive the false impression that the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked will occur simultaneously. Young argues that the passage implies a general resurrection, but this is impossible in light of other Scripture, particularly the parallel passage of **Rev 20:4-6**, which distinguishes the first

resurrection of the saints who are raised immediately after the tribulation period (the same group described here) and the second resurrection of the wicked occurring a thousand years later. As is the case with other Old Testament prophecies (e.g., **Zech 9:9-10**), future events separated by any years are **telescoped together** with later revelation clarifying the time difference.

S. Lewis Johnson: Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake and these will awake to eternal life. But those, that is those who did not awake, who did not participate in that resurrection they will have their resurrection after the kingdom and they will awake to disgrace an everlasting contempt. So, this text that on the surface might appear to teach one general resurrection really teaches that believing Israelites are going to be resurrected at the beginning of the kingdom period, but those unbelieving ones are reserved for the great white throne judgment, which follows the kingdom of the Lord Jesus upon the earth.

III. (:3) REWARD FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE -- CAPACITY TO SHINE AS STARS – RADIATING THE GLORY OF GOD

"*And those who have insight will shine brightly*
like the brightness of the expanse of heaven,
and those who lead the many to righteousness,
like the stars forever and ever."

Stephen Miller: Both parts of this verse contain parallel ideas.

Thomas Constable: The emphasis on **hope** for the Jews living during this time continues in this verse. **Rewards** will follow resurrection. Those Jews who have insight into the importance of remaining faithful to God, and who do so, will receive glory (cf. **Daniel 11:33; Daniel 11:35**). Those who lead others to do right will too. Their glory will be similar to the glory of the sky above, and to the stars (cf. **Matthew 13:43**). The angel expressed this blessing in a beautiful parallelism. Their glory will involve the privilege of reigning with Jesus Christ during His millennial kingdom, and from then on-forever (cf. **Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27; Revelation 20:4**).

John MacArthur: I really believe what you have here is this, the concept that in eternity we will be rewarded by the **capacity to manifest the blazing glory of God**. There are little stars and there are big stars as we look in the sky, right? They're all stars and they're all beauty – beautiful, but all of them have a different beauty.

And I believe in eternity we will shine as stars. And I believe that the capacity to glorify God will be dependent upon our faithfulness. We'll all shine like the brightness of the firmament. In other words, we will all have the capacity to eternally radiate the glory of God. We'll all be blazing suns in eternity. But there's a **special glow** for they that turn many to righteousness. They shall shine as the stars forever and ever.

* * * * * * * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) What has been the benefit to you of studying these prophecies about world history and especially end time events?

2) What is the role of Michael in fighting on behalf of Israel in the end times?

3) How does this passage lay the foundation for the doctrine of eternal heaven and hell?

4) How will God reward your spiritual discernment and service?

* * * * * * * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Stephen Miller: In summary, a number of truths concerning the resurrection are set forth in this passage.

- First, it is a bodily resurrection. The body is brought out of the grave and infused with new life.
- Second, this new body is immortal.
- Third, even unbelievers will spend eternity in bodily form.
- Fourth, the resurrected saints receive great honor and great reward, whereas the opposite is true for unbelievers.

Andrew Hill: It seems best to understand the **doctrine of resurrection from the dead** as one of those theological concepts that develops **progressively** through the history of God's revelation from the OT to the NT. Lucas, 302, identifies several strands of thought in the OT that "move toward some kind of meaningful existence beyond death." These strands include the strong belief of the psalmist that a deep relationship with God does not end at death (**Pss 16:9–11; 49:15; 73:23–26**), the language of the national restoration of Israel after the judgment of God (especially in the Prophets; cf. **Eze 37:12–13; Hos 6:2**), and Job's reference to the existence of a "*redeemer*" who will establish his innocence after his death (cf. **Job 19:23–27**). According to Lucas, 303, "all three strands contribute something to the belief in resurrection that finds its expression in **Dan 12:1–3**" (cf. Miller, 316–18, for a less cautious approach to the OT teaching concerning afterlife—an approach rooted in Lacocque's assertion, 235–36, that "the faith 'in resurrection, immortality, and eternal life' is very old in Israel").

Iain Duguid: When my son Jamie was about eighteen months old, he went out for a walk with his mother. As they walked along, they came across a dead bird lying beside the road. After bending over it and examining it closely with all of the seriousness of a toddler encountering something that he had never experienced before, Jamie looked up at my wife and said, "It can't be fixed, Mommy, can it?" To which she could only respond, "No, Jamie. **It can't be fixed**".

The apocalyptic parts of the Bible, like the Book of Daniel, remind us that we live in a world that cannot simply be fixed. It needs to be **recreated**. To be sure, God will eliminate all evil in the end, but sin and sickness will be defeated according to his timetable, not ours. In the end, the broken shall be made whole and all tears will be wiped away. But until the coming of God's kingdom, brokenness and suffering, pain and persecution will continue to be the normal state for believers. We live in a world that is profoundly broken.

This has been the message of the Book of Daniel from the beginning, and it is still its focus as the book draws to a close. Remember, this closing chapter is part of God's answer to Daniel's concerns in the third year of Cyrus. At this time, God's people had returned to Jerusalem, yet had found progress frustratingly slow and difficult in the face of powerful and entrenched opposition. As a result, the people had started to despair. The prophet Isaiah had foretold a glorious future in which there would be a new heavens and a new earth (**Isa. 65:17-19**).

Similarly, Jeremiah anticipated a new covenant in which God's law would be written on the people's hearts (**Jer. 31:33**). Ezekiel also foretold a new heart and new spirit for the people that would be accomplished through the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit (**Ezek. 36:26-27**).

When were these glorious prophecies going to find their fulfillment? The people had returned to their land but it seemed that nothing had really changed. Internally they wrestled with the same sins as before, and externally they were faced with the same trials and problems. How long before their expectations of real change and healing were realized? How long would they be broken?

Bob Deffinbaugh: Michael, the guardian prince of the nation Israel, is revealed as the one who will arise, bringing about the Great Tribulation. Israel's time of great suffering is God's appointed means for her deliverance; thus, the angel appointed to protect her precipitates by his actions the time of her suffering. When Michael arises and the tribulation begins, it is like the doctor who "breaks the water" of a woman as she nears the time to give birth to her child. A time of pain will come upon her, but it is through this pain that the joy of new life will come to pass.

The righteous do not receive their full reward in this life. When the wicked rule, the righteous may suffer persecution and even death because of their faith in God and their obedience to Him.

Dan Duncan: This life is not all there is. It's so easy to become enamored of this world and all that's around us, and the daily nature of it. It's difficult to not just live for this moment, live within the moment and just think about tomorrow, or next year, or retirement, or whatever. All those things are fine to think about. But the danger is we fail to remember that this life is brief and this world, as John tells us in his first epistle, is presently passing away. It's not going to last.

This life isn't all there is. It's an alluring place and it's easy to become enamored of it. But this life is not all there is; this world is not all there is. We have eternal life, and we have something glorious before us; and in **verse 3**, the glory of it is described: a fascinating description, a magnificent description. Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven like the stars forever and ever. We're going to shine like stars.

John MacArthur: At the very time when everything is the worst, in the middle of the great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, when there is this great world ruler, when there is this massive warfare that ends in the bloodbath of Armageddon, at that very time when the Antichrist attempts to slaughter all of Israel, when he desecrates the temple, at that very time hope will dawn.

That's the message as **chapter 12** opens. It is the time of the ascendancy of the Antichrist, the time of the domination of the willful king, the time when Antichrist rises to his zenith, the time when he fights against the north and the south and the east, the time when he wins great victories, the time when he establishes his power over the Earth, the time when he commits his abominable deed in the temple, the time when he establishes himself as the only God and consumes every other religion in the world, the time in the last three and a half years of the tribulation, the time of Armageddon. It is during that time, the angel says, Daniel, that your people can have hope.

In other words, when it gets to the worst, it's nearly time for the best. The darkest comes just before the dawn. Well, how and why? How and why at that time can men have hope? Several reasons. I want to share them with you. First of all, there will be a **special distress**. There will be a **special defender**. There will be a **special deliverance**, a **special destiny** and a **special dividend**. Those are the reasons for hope.

Paul Ferguson: This Great Tribulation Period (GTP) will be a time of **great evangelism**. Indeed, this will be the greatest revival in history when a whole race of people are brought to Christ, "*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn*." (**Zech. 12:10** cf. **Rom. 11:26-28**)

Jonah was used to bring a whole city to repentance. But the revival in the GTP will bring a nation to repentance in less than 4 years. God will preserve them as a living remnant, redeemed people. These people will enter the Millennium. Many commentators believe that from the Jewish people will become the greatest missionary force that the world has ever seen. They are the "*wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament*." These "wise" evangelists are reflected in the 144,000 identified as an elect group in **Revelation 7** and the 2 divinely empowered witnesses of **Revelation 11**, "*But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." (**Rev. 11:2-3**) Many of them will give their lives for the faith. But their faithfulness unto martyrdom will be greatly rewarded.

The world has their stars – movie stars, pop stars, sports stars, business stars etc. But God has a very different perspective on stardom. **He honours those who point people to Jesus Christ.** The people God honours have eternal rewards, "*for ever and ever*." Although the context of this verse is likely speaking of the soul winners of the GTP it has equal application to saints in every age. Every person who brings people to Christ has an eternal reward. Our faithfulness on earth will be proportionate to how we reflect the glory of God in eternity.

David Thompson: IT IS REVEALED TO DANIEL AND TO US THAT ISRAEL WILL SURVIVE THE ANTICHRIST AND TRIBULATION AND ONE DAY SHINE AS THE NATION OF GOD.

What Daniel learns here is that there is a high ranking angel who is specifically connected to Israel, whose name is Michael. It is his job to monitor all things that pertain to the nation Israel and to see to it that she is defended (**Daniel 10:21**). He will see to it that one-third will survive (**Zechariah 13:9**). Michael and his angels will go to war against Satan and his angels and the outcome will be Satan and his angels will be confined to this earth (**Revelation 12:7-9**). He will go on a rampage against Israel (**Revelation 12:13**), but Michael will see to it that Israel is protected for 3 ½ years (**Revelation 12:13-17**). . .

It is brought out in this verse that this will be an unprecedented time of distress for Israel (**Matthew 24:21**). Satan is trying to rid the world of the Jew in order to prevent Christ from having a Kingdom to come back to. But the nation will be saved. This is the time Paul alluded to when he said that "*all Israel would be saved*" (**Romans 11:26**). It will be Michael who will play a key role in all of this. Those Jews who are found written in the book of life will be rescued.

Now the question arises, if only a remnant of Israel will be delivered to enter the Kingdom, what about those who were believers who were killed during the Tribulation and what about those O.T. believers who died before these things ever happened? What about Daniel, Joseph, Abraham, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and a host of others who believed in the coming Messiah? God gives Daniel some comforting news here that at the end of the Tribulation there will be a resurrection of **many, not all**, to everlasting life. Since a resurrection is promised eventually to all people, this "*many*" tells us that there is more than one resurrection, because eventually all will be raised, both believer and unbeliever. Actually there are <u>three resurrections</u> yet to occur:

1) The "*in Christ*" resurrection for N.T. believers which will end the Church Age at the Rapture (**I Thessalonians 4:16-17**).
2) The resurrection of Tribulation believers and O.T. believers at the end of the

Tribulation (**Daniel 12:2**).

3) The resurrection of all unbelievers at the end of the Millennium to face the Great White Throne Judgment before being sentenced to the eternal Lake of Fire (**Revelation 20:11-15**).

The resurrection being discussed here is <u>resurrection #2</u>.

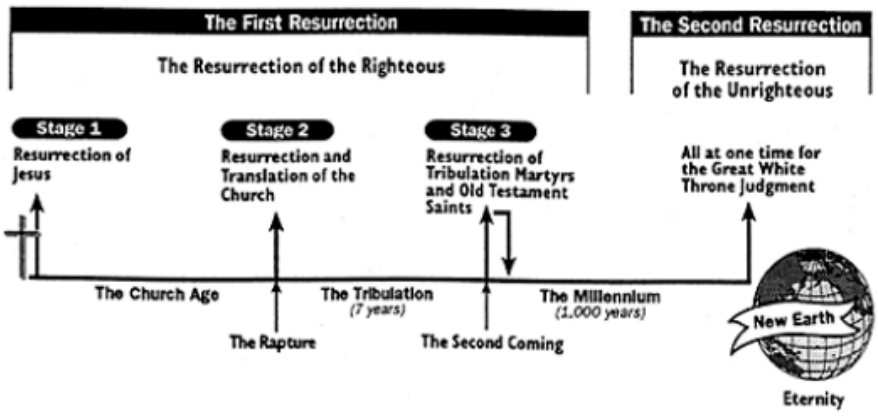
Those alive during the Tribulation will hear a direct witness from 144,000 Jewish evangelists (**Revelation 7:4-8**). Many will believe on Christ and be killed; they will be raised up at the end of the Tribulation to enter the Kingdom.

Furthermore, in the O.T., there were many faithful Jews who anticipated a resurrection day. For example, Abraham believed it when he was about to offer up his son Isaac (**Genesis 22:5; Hebrews 11:19**). Job believed in a resurrection (**Job 19:25-26**). Isaiah predicted that there would be a resurrection (**Isaiah 26:19**). Hosea predicted a deliverance day from the grave (**Hosea 13:14**). It was even revealed by David that the Holy Son of God would be raised from the dead (**Psalm 16:9-10**). The resurrection has always been the **blessed hope** of the believer.

What is described here is the resurrection of O.T. believers and Tribulation martyrs to inherit the 1,000 year millennial Kingdom. This is referred to as the "*first resurrection*" (**Revelation 20:5**).

The resurrection of all unbelieving dead is referred to as the "*second resurrection*" (**Revelation 20:12-13**). Old Testament saints went to a place called "*Abraham's bosom.*" It is a place of **comfort** for the O.T. believer, which features the very presence of Abraham, Moses and the prophets (**Luke 16:22-31**). At the end of the Tribulation, all of these O.T. believers will be raised to inherit their Kingdom. It will be a glorious day for Israel as a nation. . .

Daniel could be comforted knowing that God did have a **future plan for Israel**. Even though things will become difficult for her, God will preserve her and eventually bring her into her Promised Land where she will flourish as the nation of God.



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Dr. Jerry Harmon: **Three Promises for End Times Troubles (12:1-3)**
Introduction: Wouldn't you like to know some of the future? What will happen and befall our own people and our own nation? That is exactly how Daniel feels. That is the concern of his heart. He is praying over the people of Israel. He wants to know what will befall them in the future.

Big Idea: **Three words or three promises that give Daniel hope and give the nation of Israel hope.**

I. Hope of Salvation (12:1)

A. The Trouble

We're talking about the end time. He's putting in context here the events from verses 40 down to verse 45. When the nations push against Antichrist in the end times in the tribulation and there follows a great war, Michael, the great angelic prince, will stand up and he will guard the nation.

First, there will be this massive invasion. Secondly, the Antichrist will march his army through Israel. Third, Russia will gather her allies and launch a massive attack against Israel. Fourth, the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel, and he will begin to persecute the Jews Horribly all for these things will hurt Israel and Israel will begin to suffer the worst. This is going to be the worst time. There's never been a time like this.

Two-thirds of the Jews will lose their lives during that three and one-half year period, during the Great Tribulation, the latter part of the Tribulation. But again, God and His sovereignty will not permit Israel to be totally annihilated. **Jer. 30:7**
God says the reason he will allow them to suffer is because he is refining them. He is preparing them. Why? For the coming of Jesus Christ.

B. The Triumph

Michael's the warrior, he's the protector, he's the one that's constantly warring and he's watching over God's people, Israel. You might say that Michael is the protector of Israel. Rev. 12 gives a picture of the war that will go on when Michael protects Israel. Chapter 12 is filled with imagery that speaks about literal events.

In the book of Revelation, there are four symbolic women that speak of something literal. In the beginning of the book, there's Jezebel. She was an actual woman, but she spoke about paganism in the church. Then there's the harlot in Revelation 17 that represents the city of Babylon. And then there's Revelation 19, the bride of the land that is obviously who the church, right? But then you can hear this woman, this is the fourth woman in the book. Who does she represent? Well, the key is, look at the way she's described in verse one, a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. Now, that description reflects Genesis 37, verses nine through eleven, which is the dream of Joseph, a woman who has who's clothed with the sun. Who is this? This is Israel. The woman speaks about the nation of Israel. She has a crown upon her head. How many jewels are in that crown? There's twelve twelve stars, and that refers to the twelve tribes of Israel. She's clothed with the sun,

which speaks about Israel's glory. Israel was designed to reflect the glory of God, the nation chosen for God in that exalted status. And so she also has birth pains. She's going to have a child. And question, who does the child represent? That's Christ.

There appeared another great wonder in heaven and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his head. Question, who does the dragon symbolize? Satan. Very easy. Red, that's the color of fiery destruction and blood. He has seven heads, a seven-headed monster. This depicts the seven, I think, seven consecutive world empires that Satan dominated. The Egyptian Empire, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greece, Rome, and the future Antichrist Empire. And so here is Satan.

He's ready to devour the child as soon as she delivers it. And that is a picture of how Satan was throughout history trying to prevent the coming of the Messiah. He didn't want Jesus to come because he knew that was the beginning of his doom, right? And so all throughout biblical history we see events that really, if you look behind the scenes, that's the dragon trying to prevent the coming of the Christ.

Satan was unable to accomplish his purpose. Christ was able to come. He provided redemption. And God the Father took them to heaven, to his throne. And Satan failed. And so now there's the fury of the dragon. So who does he turn his fury towards? Towards the woman. Towards who? Who's the woman? Israel. During that latter part of the Tribulation, God will protect Israel. God will watch over Israel. And if God doesn't do that, again, Israel will be obliterated. And by the way, the only reason Israel is still alive today is because God's watched care and protection.

Satan's cast out of heaven and now he's confined to the earth. That's good news for those in heaven. The bad news is for those on the earth, because now they got to contend with them. And again, this is when the tribulation picks up. This is when it's great tribulation. They're rejoicing in heaven, but on earth, those who are there need to learn how to overcome him. How? by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony. That is salvation through Jesus Christ.

<u>Applications:</u>

1) Satan has four basic targets: Christ, Israel, Angels, believers
2) Believers have been given authority through Christ. Satan is a defeated foe, and the only victory he has in our life is what you let him have.
3) Satan's the accuser of the brethren; we have Jesus Christ as our Advocate

II. Hope of Resurrection (12:2)

Some bible scholars claim that the doctrine of bodily resurrection is only a NT truth. But there are a number of references to this in the OT. **Gen. 11:19; Heb. 11:19; Job 19:25-27; Hos. 13:14; Ps. 16:9-10**

Now, Daniel also speaks about two aspects of the resurrection in verse two. He said, some to everlasting life. and some to shame and everlasting contempt contempt. So we

have a positive side of the resurrection and we have the negative. There are 3 parts to the positive side of resurrection.

- The first part is what is called the first fruit = Jesus Christ and those raised with Him (Matt. 27)
- The second phase is the main harvest = the church at the rapture
- The third phase is the gleanings = the parts of the crop that were missed = those raised at the end of the tribulation period

Then there is the Great White Throne Judgment for unbelievers.

III. Hope of Glorification (12:3)

There's a sense in which God's people will shine with the glory of God at that time of resurrection when we get our brand new glorified bodies. By the way, won't you be glad when we finally get that glorified body?

Notice how resurrection and glorification is kind of linked together here in 1Corinthians 15 just as it is in Daniel chapter 12. Paul begins to explain further what the resurrection body will be like. Not only will there be a resurrection, but the resurrection body will be wonderful. The body that we have now, this is a body that was designed to live on this earth. This is called a terrestrial body, OK? But one day, you're going to get, should I say it, an extraterrestrial body.

TEXT: Daniel 12:4-13

TITLE: FINAL INSTRUCTIONS TO DANIEL REGARDING THE LAST DAYS

BIG IDEA:
GOD EXERCISES CONTROL OVER THE NATIONS UNTIL THE VERY END WHEN HE WILL SAVE AND PROSPER ISRAEL SO REMAIN FAITHFUL NOW IN ANTICIPATION OF FUTURE REWARD

INTRODUCTION:

Wayne Barber: There are six instructions that Daniel gets for the final days. Things that God wants him to be informed about, things that He wants him to do up until the time of the prophecy:

1. Daniel is to preserve his book for the people of the last days
2. Daniel is told the tribulation is necessary so that Israel might be saved
3. Daniel is to stop asking questions that don't concern him
4. Daniel is not to worry about Israel
5. Everything God told Daniel has a timetable to it
6. Daniel was told to stay faithful to the end and he will be rewarded

Thomas Constable: Even though Daniel and his people did not understand this book's prophecies as well as we do, simply because we have seen many of them fulfilled, these predictions did comfort them. They reassured them that Yahweh would ultimately deliver Israel from the hostile Gentiles, and thus fulfill His covenant promises.

John Walvoord: For Christians living in the age of grace and searching for understanding of these difficult days which may be bringing to a close God's purpose in His church, the book of Daniel, as never before, casts a broad light upon contemporary events foreshadowing the consummation which may not be far distant. If God is reviving His people Israel politically, allowing the church to drift into indifference and apostasy, and permitting the nations to move toward centralization of political power, it may not be long before the time of the end will overtake the world. Many who look for the coming of the Lord anticipate their removal from the earth's scene before the final days of the time of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

When the plan of God has run its full course, it will be evident then with even more clarity than at present that God has not allowed a word to fall to the ground. As Christ said while on earth, "*Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled*" (**Mt 5:18**).

Steve Zeisler: Again, what we are given in Daniel is a clear outline of the future. I am convinced that it is foretelling and that it is miraculous. We are supposed to know that God is in charge of history, and we know enough about history, especially its end, to live with confidence, to pray with hope, and to not be fooled. But the book is deliberately written in such a way that it is somewhat disorienting, so that we will not

find ourselves thinking we know everything there is to know about this. We are supposed to understand that we are in the presence of a God who is too big to contain. **The essential response is worship**. Both the liberals who would minimize the book of Daniel and the most conservative who would claim to understand every reference, miss the point because they end up too far from the worship of God.

I. (:4) INSTRUCTIONS TO PRESERVE THE VALUABLE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK

A. Message Needs to Be Preserved for the End Times

> "*But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time;*"

Stephen Miller: As in **8:26** this admonition concerned the preservation of the document, not its being kept "secret" (NRSV).

In the ancient Near East the custom was to "*seal*" an important document by impressing upon it the identifying marks of the parties involved and the recording scribe. A sealed text was not to be tampered with or changed. Then the original document was duplicated and placed ("closed up") in a safe place where it could be preserved. . .

Gabriel therefore was instructing Daniel to preserve "*the words of the scroll*," not merely this final vision but the whole book for those who will live at "*the time of the end*" when the message will be needed. This future generation will undergo the horrors of the tribulation ("*time of distress*") and will need the precious promises contained in the Book of Daniel – that God will be victorious over the kingdoms of this world and that the suffering will last for only a brief time – to sustain them.

Wayne Barber: What an incredible thing he's telling him. "Daniel, you seal this up. This has not been a wasted experience. You haven't had these visions for nothing. You weren't told to write them down for nothing. They're going to be useable some day. Daniel, seal them up, preserve them, all the way to the end times. To the last days, but particularly the end times, because people are going to want to know. They're going to go here, they're going to go there, they're going to look over everywhere trying to find out what's going to take place in the end times. Daniel, you have a piece of the puzzle. You preserve it, you take care of it; they're going to need it in that day."

B. Message Will Be Searched Out as Valuable to Increase Insight into End Times Events

> "*many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.*"

Stephen Miller: An increase in travel toward the end of the age is not the idea of the phrase "*will go here and there*." In a number of Old Testament passages (e.g., **2 Chr 16:9; Jer 5:1; Amos 8:12; Zech 4:10**), Hebrew *yesotetu* denotes "*to go here and there*" in search of a person or thing, and that is the meaning here. An "intense"

searching seems indicated by the verb form. The purpose of this search will be "*to increase knowledge*."

Yet Gabriel was not predicting a mere surge in scientific "knowledge," and so forth, in the last days. The article appears with "*knowledge*" (lit., "*the knowledge*"), showing that a particular kind of "knowledge" was intended, that is, when and how Daniel's message is to be fulfilled. As the time of fulfillment draws nearer, the "*wise*" will seek to comprehend these prophecies more precisely, and God will grant understanding ("*knowledge*") to them.

Warren Wiersbe: **Daniel 12:4** is not a reference to automobiles and jet planes or the advancement of education. It has reference to the **study of God's Word** in the last days, especially the study of prophecy. **Amos 8:11, 12** warns us that the day will come when there will be a famine of God's Word and people will run here and there seeking for truth but won't find it. But God's promise to Daniel is that, in the last days, His people can increase in their knowledge of prophetic Scripture as they apply themselves to the Word of God.

II. (:5-7) INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE DURATION OF THE "TIME OF DISTRESS"

A. (:5) Angelic Messengers – Witnesses to God's Revelation

"*Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing,*
one on this bank of the river, and the other on that bank of the river."

Andrew Hill: Daniel's final vision ends where it began, along the banks of the Tigris River (**v. 5**; cf. **10:4**).

B. (:6a) Addressing the Supreme Revealer of Divine Truth

"*And one said to the man dressed in linen,*
who was above the waters of the river,"

Stephen Miller: At this point in the narrative "*the man clothed in linen*" (Christ) is reintroduced. He is described as standing in midair "*above the waters of the river*." Daniel was witness to a striking scene. Two angels were on either bank of the river, the interpreting angel evidently was still standing before him, and the Lord was exalted above them all.

C. (:6b) Anxious Inquiry: How Long Will the Great Tribulation Last?

"*How long will it be until the end of these wonders?*"

Stephen Miller: The question is not, How long will it be before these things take place? But **How long will they continue when they begin to occur**? Such an understanding is confirmed by the reply given in the next verse. In **8:13** the exact Hebrew phrase translated "*how long*?" is also employed to describe the duration of a predicted crisis.

Sam Powell: **How long?**

- Longer than you think.
- But precisely determined by God. Not one day longer.
- It goes until the holy people are shattered.
- God delights to show his strength when there is no more hope in us.
- So we are called to patience and endurance.

https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/632137542472.pdf

D. (:7) Authoritative Response

1. Solemnity and Certainty of the Response

"*And I heard the man dressed in linen,*
who was above the waters of the river,
as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven,
and swore by Him who lives forever"

John Walvoord: The fact that the one making the statement raises both hand indicates the solemnity of the oath. Ordinarily, only one had was raised (**Gen 14:22; Deu 32:40**).

Andrew Hill: The oath sworn by the man clothed in linen (**v. 7**) attests both the truthfulness of the testimony given and the certainty of the promise that all these things will be accomplished within the specified time period off three and a half years (**v. 7c**).

Peter Wallace: So the raising of the hands to heaven and swearing by the one who lives forever signals that this is really **important** and really **certain**! But in this case, the thing that is really important and really certain is also very **unclear**!!

2. Specific Time Duration of the Great Tribulation

"*that it would be for a time, times, and half a time;*"

Stephen Miller: During these three and one-half years, "*the power of the holy people*" will be "*finally* [probably better, "*completely*"] *broken* [or "*shattered*"]." The "*holy people*" in this context is a specific reference to Israel; therefore their "*power*" being "*broken*" signifies that the nation will be utterly defeated by their enemies. That the Jewish state will be attacked by many nations and crushed by them is taught elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., **Zech 12-14**). A breakdown in Israel's resistance to God (and his Messiah) may also be implied here. When in desperate straits, the Jewish people will cry out to God for help, repent of their sins, and receive Jesus as their Messiah (cf. **Zech 12:10-14**). At that time the Lord will return to rule the earth, and the tribulation will end ("*all these things will be completed*"). Zechariah describes Israel's deliverance (cf. **14:3-11**).

Paul Carter: Now keep in mind, that the wonders in view here include overlapping realities - near history [Antiochus Epiphanes] and far history [Antichrist and the Great Tribulation] - so this is a complicated question and it receives a complicated answer: "*a time, times and half a time*."

Well to state the obvious, it would be difficult to enter that into your calendar. Tremper Longman again is helpful here, he says: "The intention is not to give a precise time period but rather to indicate that just as wickedness seems to be gaining momentum, it will be slowed and then stopped. Such cessation will happen at a time of great distress, since it will be at the moment when the power of the holy people has been finally broken. Deliverance comes at the most unlikely time." Are you hearing that?

See, that's the beauty of symbolic language – only symbolic language can speak about two separate realities under one set of numerical terms. That's what this. Its heaven saying: "It will last as long as it lasts and the second duration will be analogous to the first." And that's useful because the tribulation under Antiochus IV Epiphanes lasted about 3.5 years. It was long – but it was not terribly long. And then when it had served its purpose – it was over fast. The leash was yanked, the idol fell and the reign of terror came to an abrupt and inglorious end. So shall it be IN THE FUTURE. https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/32220152748083.pdf

3. Sovereign Purpose Involves Humbling Israel – Breaking Her Self-Sufficiency

"*and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.*"

Wayne Barber: In his answer in **verse 7**, he also gives the reason why the tribulation has to be there to begin with. He gives Daniel an answer that Daniel really hasn't even asked about. Look what he says, he says, "*a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed*." You see, **Israel's power, Israel's self-sufficiency, has got to be broken**. Here is Daniel in **chapter 10**, way back, praying that God would turn away His wrath from His people. And God says, "Son, it's not that easy. You don't know how deep the root goes. You don't even realize, Daniel, that the transgression of Israel will be to reject Jesus as their rightful King." And if this is Jesus speaking to Daniel, then He's telling him, "They're going to have to receive Me and it's going to take all this persecution, it's going to take this tribulation to break them down. And once they're humiliated, then they'll look up and then they'll realize that I am their King. And therefore then they will bow down and receive Me as their Messiah. So Daniel, why is going to be allowed? Because of the hard-heartedness of Israel. Because they are stubborn and they're rebellious, I must break it down so that they then can be saved."

Bob Deffinbaugh: Israel's deliverance does not come about because God will make them strong, but rather because God will use wicked men to shatter the power of His holy people. Here again we come to a biblical principle which defies human logic but consistently underlies the way God deals with men.

The principle is this: **God's power and our deliverance come not through our strength but through our weakness**.

III. (:8-13) INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME – REWARD FOR THE RIGHTEOUS

A. (:8) Confusion of Daniel Regarding the Eventual Outcome

"*As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said,*
'My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?'"

Wayne Barber: Now he doesn't mean how long will it be. He knows that; three and a half years. He doesn't mean who will it be that will persecute the people. He knows that it's the little horn, the Antichrist. He doesn't mean why are you doing it. He already heard that; he understands it, because of the hard-heartedness of Israel. But he's asking a different question. What will be the outcome? In other words, what he's asking here and the phrase is so clear, the outcome means **what will be the last few events** of that three and a half year period of time **that will cause Israel to be delivered** from the Antichrist.

That's one thing that was very vague in all of his visions. That was one thing that wasn't answered that clearly. We do know the Antichrist will be destroyed and not by any man but God will destroy him. We know that. But he wanted to know what will be the final events of that three and a half year period of time that will cause Israel to be saved. He understands now that Israel is going to be alright, but **how are they going to be alright. . .**

"You stop asking these silly questions. The answer that you're looking for you're not going to get. It doesn't concern you, so just cool it. And just trust me."

Well, I want you to know the thing that comforted me in this is that I don't have to know all the answers. When there is no apparent answer, it doesn't mean that God doesn't have one, it just means that right now, for where you are and where I am, **He is the answer**. **Just trust Him**. In the appointed time you'll understand if you need to, but right now you don't need to know.

B. (:9) Curiosity Must Submit to Divine Concealment

"*And he said, 'Go your way, Daniel,*
for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time."

Peter Wallace: Why are you so worried about your life? You already know the end of the story! **Don't be anxious**, Daniel! Go your way. The words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. The image here is that the word is certain – this is going to happen!

Stephen Miller: This is not a rebuke (additional information is provided in **vv. 11-12**) but simply indicates that the prophet should go on about his life and not be concerned about his lack of knowledge because the vision related to the far distant future.

Thomas Constable: "God in His infinite wisdom has revealed to us only that which it is needful for us to have in order that we may know what He requires of us. He does not reveal that which does not directly contribute toward this end. Scripture is not a body of esoteric mystery given to satisfy idle curiosity. It is given that we *'might not sin against Thee*' (**Psalms 119:11 b**). It is a thoroughly **practical Book**." [Note: Young, pp. 260-61. Cf. **2 Timothy 3:16-17**.]

C. (:10) Clarity Will Come to the Refined Righteous in the Last Days

"*Many will be purged, purified and refined;*
but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand,
but those who have insight will understand."

Stephen Miller: There seems to be little room here for the prospect held out by some that the world will turn to the Christian gospel and thereby bring in the kingdom of God upon the earth (**postmillennialism**). According to Daniel's prophecies, wickedness will not decrease in the last days but will escalate to a grand scale under the Antichrist.

Andrew Hill: "The implication is that the suffering of the wise will not have been futile after all, for redemption will be extended to many – the many who will be led to righteousness (see **12:3**)" (Seow, 194). . . Seow, 194, correctly observes that in the context "*the wicked*" refers to the "renegade Jews who abandoned the covenant" (cf. Wood, 326-27).

Wayne Barber: Are you sure that Israel will be alright. And basically what he says is, "Don't you worry about Israel." "Many will be purged, purified and refined." Now the word "*purged*" there means cleansed. And the word "*purified*" means to be made white. And of course the word "*refined*" explains itself. And what he's talking about is **salvation**. There's going to be a salvation time for many of the Jews during that time.

Bob Deffinbaugh: While the wicked will blindly pursue the same course of sin, those who have insight will understand and see the hand of God divinely guiding the course of human history in such a way as to fulfill His purposes and promises.

Gordon Dickson: **The Understanding of the Wise**
In this passage, we can see 5 principles for understanding the wisdom of the wise. These principles give us guidance about the prophecies of coming events and the destinies of human being.

1. You can humbly admit that there are aspects of Biblical prophecy that even the wisest of men do not understand.
2. You can humbly admit that there are aspects of God's final plans that have not yet been revealed.
3. You can zealously press on with life knowing that God will show you His sovereign will in His good time.
4. You can trust God's purposes as you watch Him try and purify those whom He would make wise.

5. You can trust God's purposes as you watch Him confirm the wicked in their wickedness.

D. (:11-12) Commitment to Endure to the End Will Be Key

1. (:**11**) Revelation of Additional 30 Days

"*And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished,*
and the abomination of desolation is set up,
there will be 1,290 days."

Wayne Barber: The judgment of the nations is going to take place when Jesus comes back to this earth. I think what he's saying is after 1,260 days, that's when the man, the Antichrist, will be destroyed; not by his own hand but God will do it Himself. He won't need any help to do it. But from that point, 1,260 days to the 1,290 days, will be the time in which on this earth will be the judgment of the nations and all that takes place in **Matthew 25** covers a lot of that. That will be taking place in those **30 days**. So we see 1,260 days ending the three and a half year period, the awful great Jacob's distress. Then we see 30 more days up through the time that the judgment of the nations takes place.

2. (:**12**) Revelation of Additional 45 Days

"*How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!*"

Stephen Miller: Now an additional **forty-five days** has been appended to the 1,290 days, and those who endure to this time will experience great joy ("*blessed*"). Again the question is, What will happen at the end of this 1,335-day period? The tribulation is over; as a matter of fact, 1,335 would be seventy-five days after the tribulation ends. Once more dogmatism is not proper, but it has been reasonably suggested that this date is the official inauguration of the thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth. Wood thinks that the extra forty-five days are needed to set up the millennial government. Archer explains that these saints are called "*blessed*" because "they are about to become citizens of the most wonderful society governed by the most wonderful ruler in all human history – the millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Ron Daniel: What then is the **final 45 days** for? I can only imagine that it is the time that Jesus takes to **establish His government on earth**, appointing us to our positions of authority.

Remember that Jesus taught that our faithfulness to invest what God had entrusted us with, producing a return, was going to be rewarded with the statement,

Luke 19:17 ...'*Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities*.'

I believe that this is what will take up these 45 days. Now, I can't point out where that is spelled out in Scripture specifically, but I find it interesting that the **number 45** is mentioned in the Bible only twice.

The first time is in **Genesis 18**, when Abraham and God are talking about the number of righteous people in the city (**Gen. 18:28**).

The second is when Caleb is talking about the number of years that it took for him to possess the land promised to him (**Josh. 14:10**).

It seems to me that the supernatural, typological, mystical signposts are there to point us to this 45 days being the time that the righteous are appointed to their cities, finally receiving the land of inheritance which had been promised them.

So those who are blessed are those who survive the Great Tribulation, make it through the judgment of the nations, and are allowed to live in the Millennial Kingdom!
God has shown us in the book of Daniel that **He is in control**, that **He has a plan**, and that **we are to work to be a part of His plan**.

E. (:13) Concern of Daniel Must be Faithful Living Now in Anticipation of Future Reward

> "*But as for you, go your way to the end;*
> *then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion*
> *at the end of the age.*"

Stephen Miller: "*At the end of the days*" refers to the end of this present age. The prophet was not to be concerned, for he would be resurrected and receive an "*allotted inheritance*" – a great reward and a part in the kingdom of God (predicted in Daniel's own prophecies) that will someday come upon the earth and then continue into the eternal state.

Andrew Hill: As Longman, 287, notes, "by these words, God gives Daniel and all of his heirs the confidence to persist in the light of continuing persecution and trouble." There is a sense in which the epilogue of Daniel anticipates the later teaching of Jesus: "*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world*" (**Jn 16:33**). Daniel can "*go his way*," knowing that God's rule will ultimately triumph (**Da 2:44; 7:27**) and that God's people will be delivered – even those who do not live to see the final outcome, since they will experience resurrection from the dead (**vv. 2-3**)!

Wayne Barber: The thing that sticks with me through all of Daniel, I can wipe the sweat off my brow: God's in control. God is in control. And I'd best be faithful because He's not going to change, He's going to remain the same. And one day I want the reward that God has for me.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) How often do you see God bring deliverance when circumstances seem most desperate?

2) What is the purpose of God inflicting such intense suffering on His chosen nation?

3) How specific is God's timetable for the events that take place throughout world history (as well as in our own lives)?

4) Will God bring about greater understanding of end times prophecy as the final days approach?

* * * * * * * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Thomas Constable : This great book closes with a reminder that the present age of Gentile domination is not all that God has in store for humankind. There is **another age** coming, beyond the present one, in which Jesus Christ will reign in righteousness and holiness on the earth (cf. **Isaiah 11:9; Zechariah 9:10**). Christians should look forward to the beginning of this Messianic age and pray for its coming (**Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2**).

Whereas this book would have encouraged the Jews of Daniel's day, it has become increasingly encouraging to God's people as history has unfolded. Today we can see, as never before, how God has fulfilled His predictions exactly in the past. This gives us great confidence as we anticipate His faithfulness to those promises that still remain unfulfilled.

Ron Daniel: One more thing I'd like to bring up on this subject is that many refutations made by certain denominational Bible teachers is to say, "That view wasn't even adopted by the church until the 1600's. That doctrine didn't become common until the turn of the century. The early church fathers believed that this meant something different."

There are lots of views on the second coming of Christ, the Millennium, the Rapture of the Church, spiritual gifts, etc., that are completely Biblical, **yet were not formulated until relatively recently**. **Does this mean that they are not true? Of course not.** That would be to make the assumption that the early church knew everything about the Scriptures, and that over the course of the last 2,000 years, we have progressively forgotten or degenerated the doctrines. I don't believe that to be true.

We need to remember that books like Daniel and Revelation are **coming into focus now** like at no time in church history. Why? "The primary purpose of the revelation...

was to inform those who would live in the time of the end" (Walvoord). These books will be the most valuable to those who read them during the time of the end.

John MacArthur: So God tells us the future to authenticate the truth of His Word, to reveal the sovereignty of His person and to comfort and motivate His people. And there's one other reason. I believe God reveals the future in order to admonish the wicked and sinful, to warn them of coming judgment. God wants us to know something about the future, enough to let us know the Bible is true because it can predict and when – when it is fulfilled it shows its truthfulness. He wants us to know that He is sovereign. He wants us to be motivated and comforted. And He wants the lost and the wicked to be warned about coming doom. . .

Now, in this final section, the Lord deals with Daniel and also with a couple of angels who express some questions about the details of what is coming to pass. Even after all of the information of the book, there is still much mystery. But all of this revelation has managed to peak their interest and they want more. And so, in the closing section from verse 4 to 13, the Lord clarifies some final features. And even after the clarification, leaves an abundant mystery for the future. Now, let's see these final words and we'll take them just as they flow in the text and move right on through.

- First of all, the content sealed;
- secondly, the chronology set;
- then the confusion stated;
- the cleansing secured; and
- the commendation sworn.

Vincent Sawyer: **Wisdom in the Last Days**
I. THE WISE SHALL BE "DELIVERED" (**v. 1-2**)
(End-Time Deliverance)

II. THE "WISE SHALL SHINE" (**v. 3**)
(End-Time Harvesting)

III. THE "WISE SHALL UNDERSTAND" (**v. 4-10**)
(End-Time Comprehension)

IV. THE WISE SHALL BE "BLESSED" (**v. 11-13**)
(End-Time Inheritance)
https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/6709165086.pdf

David Thompson: GOD WILL BRING TO PASS PRECISELY WHAT HE HAS PREDICTED IN HIS WRITTEN WORD AND THEN HE WILL ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM FOREVER.

Daniel 12:4 – What Daniel was supposed to do with his prophetic writing.

Daniel was told to conceal the words and seal them up until the end of time. Obviously, since the book of Daniel has been in the O.T. for years, this does not mean that the words were not to appear in written form.

What this means is that the events Daniel has been describing will not be fully known until they occur at the end (**v. 9**). Daniel, himself, would not fully grasp the prophetic plan, nor be able to interpret all of these prophecies, because they have been designed for end times.

Now notice the end of **verse 4**–*many will go back and forth through this book and increase in knowledge.* Many will run through prophecy and try and search things and knowledge will increase. **Amos 8:11-12** says that during the Tribulation there will be a great drought concerning God's Word. Dr. John Walvoord said the ability to accurately understand inspired prophecy will require "considerable effort" (p. 292). **Amos 8:12** says finding someone who can accurately unravel God's Word will be very rare.

Now it seems to me that as the time of the end draws near, there will be a new interest in biblical prophecy and many will go back and forth through Scripture to discover it. It would also seem to me that God will permit more and more knowledge to increase through rare individuals as the time of the end draws near. Dr. Walvoord said: "… it is not too much to say that a twentieth century interpreter of Daniel may understand these prophecies with greater clarity and be able to relate them to history in a way that was impossible in the sixth century B.C. …" (p. 292).

During the Tribulation, many will literally run to the book of Daniel seeking answers to Tribulation questions and knowledge will increase. The books of Daniel and Revelation will become paramount after the Rapture of the Church. People in the Tribulation will literally physically run back and forth trying to find things from these books and knowledge will increase.

Daniel 12:5-7 – What Daniel saw and heard.

Daniel saw two other angels standing on two banks of the river and one of the angels asked the man in linen–how long before all these things happen. Now the river is not named. God is sovereign over what happens on either side of the river. It is possible it is the "Tigris" of **Daniel 10:4**. We do know two rivers will form the boundaries of the Promised Land–river of Egypt and the Euphrates (**Genesis 15:18**).

One angel wants to know how long it will be until all of this is accomplished (**v. 6**) and the answer in **verse 7** is very specific–3 ½ years. Time, times and half a time refers to 3 ½ years, 42 months or 1,260 days (**Revelation 11:2-3; 12:6, 14**). This is the amount of time that the Antichrist will have to "*finish shattering the power of the holy people*" (**v. 7**). The raising of two hands indicates the solemnity and the veracity of these things.

Daniel 12:8-13 – What Daniel wanted to know.

Daniel wanted to know what would be the outcome of all these events. In fact, in **verse 8** he says plainly that he did not understand the prophecy. These matters pertaining to the movements of the Antichrist in the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation baffled Daniel.

Answer #1 - These things will happen in the future . **12:9**
They are to be sealed up until the end time. In other words, Daniel is being told that this information will not be completely understood until the end time. Daniel is never rebuked for wanting to know everything about God and His Word.

Answer #2 - Many will become righteous because of these things. **12:10a**
Many people will undergo spiritual cleansing through the truth revealed by Daniel and certainly this will be true during the Tribulation. Prophecy will be used of God to bring many into a right relationship with Him. The threat of pending wrath is a great motive for getting right with God.

Answer #3 - Many will continue to act wickedly in spite of the things in Daniel. 12:10b
Daniel will not change wicked people. Prophecy will not change wicked people. Even though God has laid out what will happen to wicked people, it will not stop them from being wicked.

Answer #4 - Only wise people may understand prophetic things. **12:10c**
If you are beginning to understand this book of Daniel, you are on the part of wisdom. Wicked people want to study prophecy but they do not have a clue as to what is happening. The understanding of biblical prophecy requires a godly spirituality, which is after an intense understanding of the things of God and the indwelling Holy Spirit. Wicked people do not have godliness, they do not have a passion to understand God's Word and they do not have the Holy Spirit.

Answer #5 - The 3 ½ years will end with a 30 day and 45 day interval between the Tribulation and the Millennium. **12:11-12**

In **verse 11**, the emphasis is on 30 more days or 1,290 days which probably includes the judgment of Israel at the end of the Tribulation (**Ezekiel 20:33-44**). The end result is that Israel will finally be in her land with the blessings of God (**Ezekiel 34:22-30**).

Verse 12 emphasizes 45 more days (**Dan. 7:11-12**) beyond the 1,290 total (1,335 days), probably the time it takes to judge the nations before the Millennium actually officially begins (**Matthew 25:31-46**). One of the key factors at this judgment will be how Gentiles treated Jews during the terrible Tribulation.

Answer #6 - Daniel will die but then be raised up and allotted a great portion in the Millennium . **12:13**

Twice in this chapter God tells Daniel to "*go your way*" (**v. 9, 13**) not "change your ways." His commitment to precisely understand God's Word and his commitment to

prayer did not need any adjustments. Even though God's plan is massive, it is also individual.

Dr. John Walvoord concluded his study on the book of Daniel by saying this: "In the light of world conditions today, which would seem to anticipate the fulfillment of Daniel's time of the end, it is possible to understand Daniel today as never before in history. The hour may not be far distant when faithful saints in the midst of trial in the great Tribulation will turn to these pages of Scripture and find in them the strength and courage to remain true even though it means a martyr's death. For Christians living in the age of grace … the book of Daniel, as never before, casts a broad light upon contemporary events foreshadowing the consummation which may not be far distant" (p. 297).

Just as Daniel once read the handwriting on the wall, so too we need to read it because the Rapture is very near.

Do you know today that you are in a right relationship with the God who will pour out His wrath?
https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/52612188118.pdf

Jeff Kingery: **Rescue for Some; Resurrection for All**
Let's not forget that Daniel **Ch's 10-12** all link together. They compose a single (& final) vision that Daniel received, detailing prophetically what would become the history of Israel from Daniel's day, all the way up to the time of the end & the return of J.C. to rule & reign upon the earth.

The angel informed him in **Ch's 10 & 11** of how his people would be impacted 1st under the Persian empire, then under the Greek empire (highlighting Alexander the Great), going to incredible lengths to detail the events of Alexander's successors leading up to 1 king in particular (the one who would set up an abomination in the temple that would cause great desolation); Antiochus Epiphanes. The angel stopped to focus on him because he served as the foreshadow of that which will be fulfilled in another ruler in the world (perhaps I should say ruler of the world) the A.C. . .

So the angel informs Daniel **how it's all going to end**. It will give hope & understanding to the Jews who will be suffering tremendously in that day. Yet, he wants Daniel to understand that when he speaks of the suffering of Israel, that he can't over emphasize it, it'll be a time of suffering, the likes of which this world has never seen nor ever will see. So here in **Ch 12** he speaks a little more into the context of what's to come (for the nation of Israel) during the time of the end. . .

There will be a deliverance, a rescue (if you will), yet not for every last person of Jewish heritage, but for every one who is found written in the book. We're speaking here of the **book of life**. The bible is clear that in the time of the end (after the abomination that causes desolation) Israel (as a whole, not every individual, but as a nation in general) will come to trust in Jesus as their Messiah & be saved. . .

So Daniel is being **consoled** here, there are those who will be rescued (delivered physically) but all will be resurrected eventually. Some (those who died in faith) to everlasting life. Some (who didn't surrender to Christ) to everlasting contempt. . .

Vs 4 "Daniel, there are things I'm sharing w/you that you simply aren't going to understand, but when the time is at hand they'll get it." Now; some point to the capability of world travel today; & how quickly knowledge is increasing today (time forbids but it's fascinating to realize the rate at which our total knowledge as humanity is doubling every few years now). And certainly there can be application there. But contextually what the angel is telling Daniel (the interpretation) is that as the time of the end approached, people would run to & fro (that is their eyes will search back & forth [through & through] **for understanding prophetically**) & **their knowledge of prophecy will increase exponentially**. It's the knowledge Daniel is seeking that the angel is referencing. . .

The book of Daniel ends w/**encouragement**. "*Go your way*", this is going to happen, but you need to be about is laying hold of that for which God has laid hold of you. **God has a plan for each of us** . . .we'll all rest, we'll have our own end, & we'll rise again in the resurrection & receive our rewards. **Stand strong till the end**, there is an inheritance that waits you eternal in the heavens where you'll shine as the sun in the kingdom of your Father… Amen? Amen.
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Dr. Jerry Harmon: **Four Responses to the End Times**
Introduction: Jesus called us to be aware of the time, to be aware of the hour, to be aware of the signs of the times that we're living in. But he never called us to not expend the same energy. He didn't call us to be lazy watchers. He called us to be diligent laborers until the game is over.

Now, there are two things, by way of introduction, that stand out to me as I read this passage in the book of Daniel. Two things that really jumped off the page to me when I first read it.

1) there are **when questions**. How long? When? When is the beginning of the end? When are these things going to take place? **Rev. 6:10; Acts 1; Matt. 24:35**
2) Daniel did not have all of his questions answered

Big Idea: **Four Responses We Should Have to End Times and Biblical Prophecy**

I. Witnessing – 12:4
He's referring to the prophecy of Daniel, not just the things that we've seen in chapter 11 and 12, but the whole prophecy of Daniel. That's what he's referring to. Daniel, seal it up, roll up the scroll, put an official seal on it, close the book. What does that mean? Does that mean that God doesn't want us knowing what's in the book of Daniel? No, it doesn't mean that. In fact, it means the exact opposite.

What he's talking about here, you have to understand the custom in the ancient days. Whenever you had an official document, a very important document, something that had to be preserved, you had to take great care of this document. You had to take great care that this thing was going to be preserved so that it will last for a long time into the future. And so when you had a document that was that important, you would take it and roll it up and you would seal it. But before you actually did that, you would make a duplicate of the original document and the original document you would seal and put it away in a nice safe place. Why? Because you want future generations to be able to refer to this. You want future generations to be able to read this. And then the duplicate document was available for all to see. God here is not saying close up the book of Daniel, don't let anyone see it because I don't want anybody to know. No, it's the opposite. Daniel, you better take care of this written prophecy because people in the future are going to need to know what this prophecy says. You need to spread it. You need to get it out. It's not just for your day, but it's going to be for many days in the future. The idea here is to publish it and get it out, but preserve it.

The knowledge that he's referring to that will increase in the last days is the knowledge of the word of God, the knowledge of Daniel's prophecies. That's what's going to increase = the knowledge of what will be in the end days, God's plan. God is going to use you who are wise towards the truth of Scripture to turn many to righteousness. That's our job.

II. Watching – 12:5

This is a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ, and he's standing above the waters. The great scholar Whitcomb thinks this position above the waters of the river indicates his supernatural authority and power. The angels wanted to know when the Antichrist would be permitted to bring the oppression all the horrendous measures of persecution against the Jewish people, how long would it last? How long will this Antichrist be free to do those things that he wanted to do?

I don't think this question is a question of information. I think the question here is more a question of anticipation. It is a longing for all of these things to be fulfilled and complete. It's a longing for all the suffering to be over. It's a longing for Christ to come and put an end to all the warfare. The angels are anticipating the full completion of God's redemptive plan. And there may be a hint here that these angels were actually weary of the battle.

The angels are looking for it. Creation is longing and groaning for it. Let me ask you a question. Are you looking for it?

III. Waiting – 12:12

Blessed is he that waited.

Daniel, you received enough revelation now. Just go on with your life. I've given you enough. You don't need to know any more. You don't need to worry because it's in God's control. The events are in the hand of God far, far into the future. You received

enough revelation. And you need to be content with what I've given you. God knows how much we need to know. And God knows how much we can take. There are certain things that God just chooses not to reveal to us.

Jesus mentions another 30 days [beyond the three and one half years] when something will happen beyond the end of the tribulation and then another 75 after that. In other words, there's going to come some things that will happen now, remember, this is in view of the question that Daniel had asked, how's it all going to end up, Lord, what's going to happen? And Jesus said, well, let me just say this, blessed is he that waited. And those who wait until the end, these extra 30 days and then 75 days, they're going to receive a blessing.

Now, what's going to happen there? Well, let me just say what I think. I think that what will happen right after the tribulation period is the nations are going to be judged, right? Didn't the Bible say that? Right after the tribulation, what's going to have to happen? All the nations will be judged. Before millennial blessedness, before Christ sets up his kingdom, there are some transitional things that are going to have to take place. And here's the first one in Matt. 25:31. And then there's going to take time for him to set up his millennial kingdom on Earth. Christ will rule. Satan will be captive. The saints in the Old and New Testament will have authority. Truth will dominate. Righteousness will flourish. Peace will reign. Joy will abound. Justice will pervade. The Holy Spirit's power will be revealed in all of its fullness. There'll be a new temple. The earth will be purged. The curse will be lifted. There'll be plenty of food. There'll be good health and healing will be abundant. And the city of Jerusalem will be exalted. It's going to be a wonderful time.

IV. Working – 12:13

Daniel, just keep working, keep laboring. Stay faithful. Daniel had already done that right now. He's a 90 year old man. And he says, you know, you're going to go and rest. That is, you're going to die, Daniel. Your body will rest in the grave, just be faithful until you die and your body will rest in the grave and then and stand in thy lot at the end of days, when it says stand in thy lot, it has the idea of inheriting an inheritance. That is all the reward that Daniel received for his faithfulness will be given. In other words, he's saying, Daniel, you'll be there. Don't worry about it. Just go your way. Stay faithful. Keep working. You're going to die. You'll rest. And you'll stand or the word really you'll rise in my lot at the end of days, you're going to receive your reward, you're going to receive your inheritance and Daniel, you'll be there, you'll be with the rest of all of them. Just stay faithful.

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